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THE

GOVERNMENT OF M. THIERS,

FROM 8TH FEBRUARY, 1871, TO 24TH MAY, 1873.

FROM THE FRENCH

OF

M. JULES SIMON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

GOVERNMENT OF M. THIERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORK OF LEGISLATION.

When the Assembly resumed its meetings at Versailles at two o'clock on the afternoon of Monday, the 29th May, after the final defeat of the Commune, it had existed but three months and a half, and yet it already had a history.

This short history embraced three great events: the vote upon the preliminaries of peace, the refusal to sit at Paris, and the armed struggle with the Commune.

A close scrutiny of the Assembly, taking into account its votes, the measures it had already passed, its language, its attitude, might result in the following judgment: It was patriotic, liberal, a foe to centralization, keenly hostile to the Empire. It desired peace. It regarded the Republic

as a form of government at once impracticable and fatal. It regarded Paris as a constant menace to the liberty and the tranquillity of the country. It was painstaking, inexperienced, and undisciplined. As is common with the ignorant, it was easily carried away by passion, and imagination. There were but few real men in it—a great misfortune for an Assembly; and, what is perhaps still more deplorable, it failed to recognize those whom it possessed, save M. Thiers, whom it appointed to negotiate and to reign, and M. Grévy, whom it selected as its President.

From the first day antagonism existed between Paris and the Assembly.

The Assembly did not like the Republic, and Paris had made the Republic. The Assembly was irritated by what it termed the Dictatorship of M. Gambetta, and it was Paris that had entrusted rule to M. Gambetta, and had inspired him with her own ideas and passions. The reactionists cherished an old grudge against the city of the Encyclopædists, as did all the Legitimists against the city of '93. Old ideas of decentralization, revived by the excessive and oppressive centralization of the Empire, still embittered the "Rustics" against Paris. The "Rustics!" The name had been fastened upon them in contempt; they accepted it as an honour

and a challenge. One of their first acts at Bordeaux, and one full of meaning, had been the refusal to sit in Paris. They desired Fontainebleau or even Bourges. Can it be doubted that at the time when this decision was arrived at, everything that could possibly have lessened the offence of it to the capital should have been done? What was, in fact, said and done? The Commercial Bills Act had to be three times amended, and all the extensions of time three times renewed; the Assembly constantly maintaining that it was granting too much. The barely indispensable only was wrung from it. Starving, decimated, ruined Paris, exasperated by the shame of the capitulation, and the brutal insult inflicted upon it by the conquerors, when they encamped in the Place de la Concorde itself, full of discharged soldiers, of families from the suburbs whose houses had been destroyed, of convicts let out during the war and the siege, of adventurers come to hide from justice, or to profit by the general disorder, full of foreigners also, Poles, Hungarians, and Italians,—Paris had been guilty of an enormous crime; it had allowed the Commune to be established. The Assembly trembled for France, for itself; but, it must be confessed, was more angry than frightened, for it did not fully

recognize the danger, which, at first, was extreme. The Assembly displayed implacable and determined resolution;—partly from a conviction that the right must not be called in question; to a large extent, also, from the cumulation of its old feelings against the supremacy of Paris. It desired to push the war to unconditional submission, and when that submission had been obtained, to continue repressive measures till the revolutionary forces were extinguished. Nothing was done for that majority of the people of Paris who had been oppressed and driven to despair by the Commune. The efforts made for conciliation, and, at a later date, clemency, were criminal in the eyes of the Assembly. The Government, which maintained the struggle with undeviating steadfastness and unparalleled skill, but yet passionately desired to bring the civil war to a close, permitted it to be known that in case of submission it would be severe only towards the leaders, but would treat those whom they had misled with leniency: the Chamber, however, was a prey to a concealed irritation to which little expression was given, either during the struggle or at the moment of victory, but which at last broke out in the speech of M. de Broglie, on the 24th May, 1873. One

of the strange occurrences of that day was the condemnation of the very Government which had annihilated the Commune on account of its pretended leniency towards that Commune.

The Republicans, attached to the city of Paris for the same reasons which rendered the enemies of the Republic hostile to her, repeatedly sought, after the defeat of the insurrection, to bring back the Government and the Assembly to the capital. They thought, and not without reason, that neither France nor the world would believe we had returned to our normal condition, so long as Paris remained in disgrace and the parliament in exile. But the Right showed itself inflexible. Not content with resisting all the proposals of the Left, it multiplied measures on its own side which were destined to give permanence to a state of things fatal to business, to parliamentary government, and to the fame and prosperity of the country. Finally, in defiance alike of good sense and good feeling, it made the residence of the Government and of the Assembly at Versailles an Article of the Constitution, so that the forthcoming Congress must meet before the two Chambers can be brought back to Paris; and we have to shut our eyes to a formal violation of the Constitution in the residence of Marshal MacMahon at the Elysée, where he has lived almost uninter-

ruptedly since he became President. In inserting so singular a clause into the Constitution, the Right was swayed by both hate and fear (hate more than fear), by a hope of embarrassing the Paris deputies, who were actually on the point of voting against the whole Constitution, because of this Article; and lastly, by the conviction, more or less concealed, that a restoration of the monarchy was possible at Versailles, and was not so in Paris. Apart from all other considerations which lend importance to the resolution of the Assembly not to quit Versailles, the fact must be taken into account, that sooner or later, all men, even the most obstinate, yield to the influence of their surroundings. Unless a liberal deputy be as firm as a rock, old parliamentary tacticians dislike to see him choose his seat among the members of the Right. He goes out of bravado, to rise when they remain sitting, and sit when they rise; he ends by growing tired of contradiction, and allows himself to be carried away by the example of his neighbours. The Assembly, after the melancholy victory of May, might without danger have sat in the Palais Bourbon; but the coalition of the Rue des Reservoirs was not willing to sit in the Rue de Poitiers. The "Rustics" quartered on Versailles till the end of their term felt themselves

more secure in their own resolutions, and so to speak, more completely masters of themselves.

When the defeat of the insurrection rendered it possible to commence the reorganization of the country in earnest, the Assembly had before it a *tabula rasa*. No Government existed; nor any other laws than those of the old code, a legacy from the revolution, remodelled by the first Empire. All that the second Empire had done it looked upon with suspicion. All that the Government of Defence had done, the defence itself excepted, was invalid. As it had not quailed before danger, so it did not shrink from its task; to its honour be it said. Its weakness lay in not comprehending either the nature or the magnitude of that task; believing that no more was necessary than to disarm the Republicans, to lend moral influence to the priests, and to patch up a chance restoration with the help of one of the three monarchies which offered themselves. The Assembly, which wanted to be a constituent body, and loudly proclaimed that it was about to reform and to transform everything, was more reactionary than productive. All the commotion of those first days of freedom resulted in two negations, a Decentralization Commission, and some Committees of Inquiry. Had it even accomplished the impossible and brought forth a monarchy,

it might still have been said, having regard to the essential and unchangeable Republicanism of our habits and customs, that it had pledged itself to negations.

An inquiry into the Government of the Defence, an inquiry into the Deputation of Bordeaux, an inquiry into the agreements concluded, an inquiry into the 18th March, followed. Half the Chamber was holding inquiries, of which the other half was the object, and if it be asked in which of these two categories were the Bonapartists, it was the former. Count Daru, a former minister under the Empire, presided. He was nominated President of the Committee of Inquiry upon the 18th March, he also presided as substitute for M. Saint Marc Girardin, who was ill and over-fatigued, at the inquiry into the acts of the Government of the Defence. The members of the latter Government, not excepting those who were still ministers, had to appear before colleagues, of whom some had voted in favour of the war, almost in the character of accused persons. All their dignity and all their vigour were needed to enable them to reassert their true positions.

A good idea of what the sittings of a Committee of Inquiry were like, may be obtained by reading the examination of General Trochu, who, nevertheless, was a member of the Right. The hostility of the questions and the haughty tone of

the answers cannot be exceeded. He is pressed as if he were on his defence, he retorts as if he were a judge. France for more than a year presented the same spectacle as the Chamber. In her Court Martials she was occupied with trying thirty thousand political defendants, and with sifting the conduct of her generals, from Trochu to Bazaine. The press was daily engaged in the same way. Such accusations were met from the tribune by counter-accusations no less vehement. The conquered nation, instead of thinking of nothing save the foe, makes it its business to display its faults, its divisions, its grudges, its misfortunes, and its failures. Wiser counsels prevailed in the end, but the beginning was sad indeed.

In addition to the time spent in inquiries and interpellations, which are only inquiries condensed and conducted in public, the Chamber found itself at every moment with some pressing affair on its hands; at first treaties with the enemy which had to be ratified, loans which had to be concluded in order to pay the indemnity, new taxes which had to be imposed in order to provide for the formidable increase of the debt. Afterwards there was a number of special Acts, and political enactments of secondary importance; no small amount of baggage to carry, which hindered the march of the Assembly. It was, it must be

remarked, not simply a legislative power, it desired to be a constituent power, and, without proclaiming the fact or confessing it to itself, an executive power. M. Thiers was constantly repeating to it, "You have the right to make a Constitution, but you will be wiser not to do so." It retained the right, and did not object to its wisdom being extolled, promising itself that at the convenient moment it would cease to deserve such a compliment. He would also say, "I am but your delegate; I govern by your authority, and under your eyes;" but his determination was to govern alone till he should be dismissed. The Chamber, on the contrary, desired a share in everything; every day questions were asked in the House, now about the negotiations, now about the war; and it complained if disclosures which would have laid all our secrets open to the whole world were withheld; committees were appointed to assist the Government, or in other words, to observe it and to act in place of it, had they been able. M. Thiers, in the very midst of his military operations or of his struggles with the generals of the army of occupation, was summoned to give information before parliamentary committees. Apart from this taste for interference, which was natural to a sovereign assembly, circumstanced as this one was, the nature

of things compelled the deputies to legislate for the passing hour, and not to confine themselves to permanent laws. The act, or more properly, the acts, delaying forfeitures through lapse of time, and the act relative to payment of rent, are examples of what had to be done with such questions. The Commune here made short work, it frankly took the side of the debtors against their creditors; with the Assembly, which could not disregard the rights of proprietors, the case was different. It granted time to debtors, because they had been subject to violence, and because it was essential to avert failures so numerous as would have changed all our social and industrial organization. The consequences of the Commune claimed its attention frequently, and at great length. Court Martials had to be appointed, and entailed heavy expense. The maintenance and the security of thirty-seven thousand prisoners claimed attention; localities to which they could be transported had to be found and appropriated; and the conditions of their transportation had to be fixed; nor could these things be done by means of decrees and proclamations, legal enactments were indispensable. The former reigning families desired to return, they had been banished by law; an act was accordingly passed to open to them the frontiers of France and the

doors of the Chamber; another passed restoring their property confiscated under the Empire to the Orleans princes. We shall find in the questions affecting these princes, and in some others relating to Prince Jerome and the Imperial family, some of the thorns, and by no means the least sharp ones, which beset the Government of M. Thiers. His own position occasioned much embarrassment and loss of time. The more provisional his power, the more sittings were wasted over the regulation of it, sometimes with the object of making it more stringent, at other times with that of making it more provisional. Was he to have the sole right of remitting punishments, or was he to share it with a Committee of the Assembly? Had he the power to proclaim a state of siege? subject to what limitations? under what conditions? Should he combine the functions and privileges of a deputy with those of the head of the executive power? Should he be only permitted to defend his policy by deputy, or might he in person mount the tribune and take a share in the discussions? Should he be held to be responsible as president in addition to his ministerial responsibility? Could the president be dismissed, like a minister, by a vote? On the other hand, ought his authority to be confirmed definitely for a term of two years, of

five years, for life, for the term of the Assembly, for whatever time might elapse before a definite constitution was voted? Paris, again, though vanquished, still disturbed the Assembly. The entire Left demanded that the sittings should be held in the Palais Bourbon; the Left centre was to the full as decided and as pressing as the extreme Left. The Right desired to remain at Versailles, to establish the Assembly there permanently and constitutionally, to bring thither all the chief administrative offices. Lastly, enemies of the Assembly existed both within and without its own body, who suggested to it that it should simply disappear. Peace was signed, the insurrection was overcome, a provisional government existed; France, they said, had not required more than this of those whom she appointed on the 8th of February; and in prolonging its own existence the Assembly was committing an act of usurpation.

The Assembly would have been overtasked had it had no other difficulties to overcome than those which arose in the course of politics and events. But could it suffer laws to continue now that freedom prevailed, which had been passed under the second Empire for the purposes of despotism? Its decentralization committee also proved very fertile of bills; private deputies had,

rightly enough, retained the right to introduce bills under the very slight restriction of an introduction commission, whose duty it was to place preliminary difficulties in the way of legislative ardour. And the Government itself, while carrying on its struggle against the Commune, the insurrections in several great towns, and the revolt in Algeria; while negotiating with Germany, opening subscriptions for loans, contriving fresh taxation, and while talking over everything every day with the Chamber, yet managed to find time to prepare bills embodying laws of fundamental importance. The Assembly did not shrink from its task. At one period fifty-two committees were at work at the same time, some of which consisted of thirty members. A mass of legislation, which we can divide into four categories, was the result of all this labour. The first includes all those temporary enactments which have disappeared along with the circumstances which gave rise to them, and which have but little historical importance. We shall leave them aside, and group together all those acts which related to the conventions made with the enemy for the evacuation of the territory. These were the treaty of peace, and the conventions appended to it, and the loans and taxes. We shall similarly group the enactments which relate to political modifications of the Government

and the Assembly. Lastly, we shall make a separate class for those fundamental and permanent laws which more specially represent the legislative work of the Assembly, such as the municipal elections act and that on the selection of mayors, the act relative to councils general (*conseils généraux*), the Trévéneuc act, the acts relative to the election of consular judges, to the council of state, to trial by jury, to military service, and the various acts relative to public instruction. These acts, like all legislation, are unquestionably political in their nature, but they are less so, for example, than the Rivet proposal. They are rather laws than occurrences. They represent the legislative labour of the Assembly just as those enactments which we term political are the outcome of party strife.

The manner in which the question of municipalities was introduced to the Assembly is well known ; it would, however, have forced itself into notice under any circumstances. The Republican deputies of Paris proposed it as a special measure and a political bill of the first importance, undertaking to put a stop to the insurrection, if the Assembly would give to Paris the right to elect its own municipal council and its mayor. M. Thiers represented, and with reason, that it was impossible to come to decisions

of such weight on the spur of the moment. Nor was it advisable to legislate for Paris alone. Although there may be no equality between a city of two millions of souls and the other communes of France, the very existence of the insurrection stood in the way of this exceptional legislation, which would have looked like a concession made to popular tumult. What had Paris demanded since the commencement of the disturbances? Communal rights. From every point of view, therefore, a law to regulate communal rights was what was required. M. Thiers announced that a bill should be brought in in forty-eight hours. This was extremely short notice, but never was a matter more clearly pressing, and decision upon it more indispensable. This, too, is one of those questions upon which all politicians have occupied their minds for long, and one consequently which requires no preparation.

M. Picard, the Minister of the Interior, was in a position to lay the Government bill before the Assembly at its sitting of the 22nd March.

The bill proposed that the municipal elections should at once be held throughout France. All the powers conferred by these elections should be limited to three years. In the townships of departments and arrondissements, and in all towns of over six thousand inhabitants,

the mayors and deputy-mayors were to be chosen by the executive; in other communes they were to be chosen by the members of the council; in neither case could they be taken from outside the municipal council. The municipal council of Paris would be composed of sixty members, elected by voting-paper, in the twenty arrondissements, at the rate of three members of council for each. The qualification of electors was to be one year's residence in the city of Paris, that of candidates three years' residence in the arrondissement. The Municipal council of Paris annually appointed a president, vice-president, and secretary. In each arrondissement a mayor and three deputy-mayors were to be appointed by the head of the executive power.

This bill raised a clamour, not only among the adherents of the insurrection, but among that large Republican population, who, though they dreaded and hated the Commune, claimed municipal franchises for Paris on the most extended basis, and who were firmly convinced that were a single mayor and a municipal council agreed to and made eligible, the one and the other by universal suffrage, the object and the power of the insurrection would be taken from it, without any risk to the authority of the Central Government. The journals asked how M. Picard himself would

have received his own bill, when he was, under the Empire, one of the leaders of the opposition. No justification for these attacks existed. The Republican opposition had, under the Empire, asked for the election of mayors; but it would have accepted, as an immense step in advance, an elective municipal council for Paris, and for the other constituencies, a return to the law of 1831, which entrusted the Central Government with the nomination of all mayors, simply restricting its choice to members of the council. They had, it is true, claimed more, for they had desired the restoration of the 10th section of the law of July, which gave to communes of over six thousand souls, the right that their town council should elect the mayor, but they had never thought of anything beyond that, and that was exactly what M. Picard's bill proposed.

The bill did not propose that Paris should have only one mayor, whether elected by the citizens or the town council. This system had been tried under the first Republic, but it had not been fortunate; it had not proved durable; it was not regretted. Restored in 1848 in the hour of popular triumph, it disappeared after the appointment of the Assembly, and the Republicans had not at that period asked for its re-establishment. M. Garnier Pagès and M. Armand Marrast

had, in turn, borne the title of mayor of Paris in 1848. In reality they were no more than prefects nominated by the Government. The Constituent Assembly suppressed the title without remonstrance. M. Étienne Arago received it afresh in 1870, under the same conditions as M. Garnier Pagès and M. Armand Marrast, and held it for an even shorter period. Neither in 1848 nor in 1870 had any mayor of Paris been elected. An elected mayor at the head of a city of two millions of inhabitants could neither be subject to a king nor subordinate to a president.

As there is no analogy between the mayors of arrondissements, and a mayor of all Paris, it did not seem indispensable that the former should be elected, for they take no share in voting estimates and in distributing expenditure. There was a fear that if they were elected a second municipal council would be created, which would hold the first, and even in some cases, the central authority itself in check. This was a reason of great weight at a crisis such as we then were passing through. At ordinary times the mayors of the wards never think of holding meetings among themselves, or of considering themselves as representatives and guardians of those who had elected them to preside over marriages, and keep the registers. They perform no political function whatever, and there

could be no kind of danger in their being made elective, if such a measure were generally demanded.

The side on which the bill was most assailable was the clause which required a year's residence in Paris as the qualificaton of an elector, and three years' residence within the arrondissement as that of a candidate. Paris had been deserted by many of its regular inhabitants, and a nomadic population had come and usurped power in the press, the clubs, and the civic guard, and great irritation existed. Such requirements would always have been considered decidedly excessive. It is not necessary to live in an arrondissement in order to know its wants; and further, a member of the council, whatever may be the arrondissement which elected him, represents all Paris, and takes his full share in voting and appropriating the estimates. This portion of the bill was to be regretted, for while it was of no practical use, it helped to render the measure unpopular.

The discussion proceeded rapidly, and was not marked by any remarkable incidents. The majority of the Assembly entertained a profound distrust of Paris, and had no intention of placing a mayor, chosen by election, at the head of this great city and this great administration. The proposal was made by a member of the Extreme Left; but it only secured a few supporters in that

section of the Assembly, and obtained none at all among the others. Even the election of a president of the municipal council of Paris for one year was objected to, and it was resolved that the president, the vice-president, and the secretary should be elected only for the term of the ordinary sitting. M. Randot, wishing to attack the root of the evil, proposed to divide Paris into twenty communes, each with its own mayor, deputies, council, and regular municipal rights. This proposal was negatived, because it would be impossible to have twenty budgets for one single city; and after its relinquishment for the arrondissements, the question of the election of mayors was not seriously pressed, for these are purely civil officials. Four members of council for each arrondissement were agreed to in place of the three proposed by the Government, but in order to avoid election by voting-paper, it was decided to elect them in their own ward, and by separate ballot. Lastly, the attempt to make the qualification of electors and candidates in the commune of Paris an exceptional one was abandoned.

It was decided that the electors of every commune in France should be qualified to vote at twenty, and eligible for office at twenty-five. No one could be a voter in a commune unless he had had his actual domicile there for one year.

On this head, M. Batbie, the reporter, remarked that "a considerable difference exists between political and municipal elections. In the former it is right that wherever the elector may be, he shall have the opportunity of expressing his wish. Since the business is that of nominating representatives of all France, at whatever point of the territory the citizen resides, his vote ought to be taken. For this reason a residence of six months only is required, that is to say, long enough for him to be registered. Residence, even though prolonged, may be only temporary or accidental, and it is not there that the true foundation of the right to elect the corporation of the commune lies. We require a year's actual residence, because at the expiration of that time the new comer will have gained a right to his share in the advantages which membership of a commune confers, and will be bound to contribute to the expense of it."

The Committee, which shared the views of M. Picard as to the qualifications of the elector, showed itself far more liberal than he in the matter of eligibility. "We have from the first," said M. Batbie, "put aside all idea of restricting eligibility by special conditions, they would be a contravention of the rights of the electors, and appear to us useless precautions. Nomination

by the electors carries its own guarantee, and it is not right that we should exhibit distrust, want of confidence in an act passed in order to invite them to make choice of their delegates. The majority of the Commission have, therefore, negatived that provision of the bill which required three years' residence as essential for eligibility. It is to the qualification of the electors that we must look for judicious elections in the interests of order."

The Assembly, however, did not go so far as its Commission. One fourth only of the members of the council might be chosen from electors who were non-resident, and under the stipulation that such non-residents, if elected, must pay one of the four direct taxes in the commune.

After this the regulations for subdivision were settled.

In every description of election it becomes necessary to subdivide the too extensive constituencies. Under the Empire this division into sections was accomplished by the decree of the prefect, and was by no means the least powerful instrument of official candidature. The right of deciding upon subdivision, and of tracing the boundaries of the sections, was transferred to the common council.

In all these arrangements, and in all the

speeches made on the subject by the members of the majority, there is a certain liberality. The Assembly was in some respects more liberal than the Government. The divergence between the two was chiefly provoked by the constitution of the municipalities, by far the most important point in the act.

The Government, which had been, so to speak, forced to draft its bill in a few hours, had proposed temporarily to re-enact Article 10 of the Act of the 3rd July, 1848, till a fundamental law which should be closely studied had been debated at sufficient length. The following are its first and fourth paragraphs (the second and third have reference to dismissal and suspension):—

"The mayor and his deputies shall be chosen by the municipal council, and out of their own body."

"In the townships of departments and arrondissements, and in communes of more than 6000 souls, the mayors and deputies shall be chosen by the executive power from among the elected members of the municipal council."

On this point the Commission had adopted the views of the Government, based on the principle which had governed the legislation of 1838, namely, that the mayors of the small communes have a chiefly municipal character, while those

of towns of more than 6000 inhabitants, are chiefly Government agents for the administration of law.

This argument was far from being conclusive.

There are in France only 460 communes having a population of more than 6000 inhabitants. These 460 communes comprise 90 townships which have prefects (including Belfort and the 3 communes in Algeria), and 279 chief towns which have sub-prefects, in all 369. In these 369 communes the Government is directly represented by the prefect or sub-prefect, whose duty it is to see that the law is observed, and who, in the absence of the mayor, is armed with authority to remedy neglect, or put down insurrection. The remaining 90 or 91 communes are simply chief towns or country districts possessing 6000 inhabitants and rarely more, and in which the mayor is the only administrative authority. Is it worth while to introduce an exception to the law and make an attack upon liberty for so little? and can any one seriously maintain that if the mayors of these 90 communes are elected, the tranquillity of the state will be endangered?

We must remember what the law is. The municipal council cannot assemble of its own accord, the subjects upon which alone it can de-

liberate are rigidly defined; it is not, with certain exceptions, permitted to communicate with neighbouring communes except in cases of Syndicates; it may not even give expression to its desires on political matters. The functions of mayors are no less rigidly limited. By Article 22 of the Act of the 27th March, 1791, and Article 15 of the Act of the 18th July, 1837, it was enacted that if the mayor, after notice, does not discharge the duties entrusted to him, the prefect or sub-prefect may nominate a special commissioner to discharge them in his stead, and the Government, in addition to possessing the right of replacing the mayor in any special duty, has also the power to suspend or even to dismiss him. Legislation could not be conducted with more foresight and greater prudence. The elected mayor possesses, in virtue of his origin, large powers for good, but he is under inspection, controlled, and rendered powerless for evil.

Statistics prove that the fears of those who look upon municipal liberty as a source of danger are chimerical. In 1849 out of 1500 mayors and deputies nominated to 469 communes, 25 dismissals occurred, while out of 74,000 mayors and deputies elected in 36,650 communes, it was in all only necessary to pronounce 183 dismissals. The truth is, that with liberty it is easy to live at

peace. The Right had the merit of recognizing this during the debate. M. de Meaux carried the vote when he said, "We want no more sub-prefects."

The opinion of a man who is also a staunch Conservative, and has discharged the functions of Councillor of State, Vice-president of the Council of State, Prefect of Police, and Minister might have been quoted. M. Vivien, in his "Études Administratives," expresses himself as follows: "The Municipal Council, constituted as it has been by the law of 1848, is the body to which, in our opinion, the nomination of the mayor should be entrusted. We are even of opinion that the exceptions admitted by that law should be diminished. It is, perhaps, necessary, that in some very populous towns, which, though not so important as Paris or Lyons, still occupy a more or less similar position, the nomination of the mayors should belong to the Government. But the same reason cannot be applied to all communes numbering more than 6000 souls, and all the townships in the departments and arrondissements, so that, in our opinion, save in a small number of very exceptional cases, the mayors should be nominated by the municipal councils."

These ideas were so favourably received on

all the benches of the Chamber, that the Commission felt it needful to offer an excuse for having adopted the restrictive proposal of Government. This was formally done through M. Paris at the sitting of the 8th April.

M. Paris. "The Commission takes part in this debate only in order to make a statement.

"In principle it unanimously agrees with the authors of the amendment; and with their theory that the mayors should be elected by the municipal councils in every commune."

Some Members. "What then?"

M. Paris. "The Committee considers that it would be wise to accept the Government bill, as a provisional measure pending the settlement of the functions of the mayors, by an act of a permanent character." (*No, no.*)

After a confused discussion of some minutes' duration, the Assembly, by 279 votes to 269, adopted an amendment, drawn by M. Antoin Lefèvre Pontales, which ran as follows: "The municipal council shall elect the mayor from among its own members, by an absolute majority obtained in a secret ballot. If after two ballots no candidate has obtained a majority, a ballot shall be taken between the two candidates who have obtained most votes.

"Mayors so elected may be dismissed by decree.

Mayors who have been dismissed are for one year ineligible for re-election."

A great tumult followed. Both the Commission and the Government felt this vote to be a defeat. The Commission required the suspension of the sitting that they might have time to consult. On its resumption M. Paris proposed the addition of the following amendment in the name of the majority of the Commission :—

"The nomination of mayors and deputies in towns of more than 20,000 inhabitants, and in the townships of departments and arrondissements, whatever their population, shall rest as a provisional measure with the Government. They shall be selected from the municipal council."

Cries of "We have voted," were heard on all sides. "The amendment," said M. Paris, "contains nothing which contradicts the vote that has been given."

On this, the majority of the deputies left their seats, and gathered in great excitement round their various party chiefs. M. Thiers, who was in his place, was questioned with eagerness which bordered on intemperance. M. Paris, if his words were to be taken in their literal sense, was justified in saying that his amendment only supplemented the vote just taken, but did not contradict it. The Assembly had laid down as a

principle that almost everywhere the mayors should be elective, in about 36,000 communes out of 36,300; the proposal now before it was that as an exceptional thing they should be nominated by Government decree in the 300 communes of the greatest importance and the largest population. This was precisely the step which the Assembly of 1848 had already taken; it had voted the general principle, and then the exception successively. The difference, and it was in favour of M. Paris, was, that the Commission of 1871 proposed to include no towns in the excepted category, save those of 20,000 souls and over; while in 1848 the regulations of 1831 had been maintained in the case of all towns with over 6000 inhabitants. M. Baroche had, at that time, even proposed to go as low as 3000, and his proposal had been supported by the Minister of the Interior, M. Recourt, a tried trusty Republican.

It was, therefore, evident that the Chamber would not contradict itself by accepting the amendment of M. Paris; it would only supplement its first vote by modifying it, which is always done when any exception is introduced into an act.

The contradiction was not indeed formal, or apparent; it did, however, exist, and this explains the extraordinary excitement that took

possession of the Assembly. On reading the speeches delivered on both sides, it will clearly appear that the majority meant to have the election of the mayors proceeded with in all the communes without exception, or, at most, with no other exceptions than Paris and Lyons. The aspect which the sitting assumed indicated this intention more clearly than words.

Two systems had been confronted: that of election, which had carried the day; and that of election as a general principle, with exceptions in the case of two or three hundred large communes—a totally different system, which had been defeated.

It was a matter of small importance that the figure of 6000 inhabitants had been once proposed as the basis of the exception, and that it had now been raised to 20,000. What the Assembly had rejected was the system of exceptions on whatever basis. What was proposed, however M. Paris might word it, was, in effect, to retract it, and to retract there and then. To add to the general irritation, it became known that M. Thiers would insist upon compliance, and would threaten to repudiate his bargain over this matter. The vote had taken him by surprise. He had not perceived anything

more than declamation in the speeches of M. de Meaux and M. Antoin Lefèvre Pontales; he believed the Chamber would adopt the recommendation of the Commission. When he heard the vote announced, he exclaimed, "I cannot remain." His colleagues, the ministers, had a hard fight with him before they could induce him to accept the amendment. He would not wait to hear M. Paris's explanation of it. He at once rose and made an excited, almost passionate speech, in which he gave no reason, save that the Assembly was making it impossible for him to carry on the Government, and that they must make their choice *hic et nunc*, between the vote on the amendment and the resignation of the President. This sort of haughty frankness, when he believed himself to be unmistakably in the right, was characteristic of him. No one else has carried it to such lengths in so powerful an assembly. His speech should be read from end to end to gain an idea of his decisiveness and vigour, and of the power which he exercised over the Assembly. These are his opening sentences, what follows corresponds with them:—

"Gentlemen, I have only a few words to say on this question; one so simple, that it carries with it its own answer; especially under the circumstances in which we are at present placed.

"I confess that I have done wrong in not having expressed my opinion on this subject, an opinion which is as unhesitating as it is sincere. (*Sensation.*) I was occupied with your dearest interests, and I was unable to believe, for a moment, that a doubt could be entertained upon the question now under discussion. (*Murmurs from the Left.*)

"Gentlemen, you may murmur, if you like, but in order fully to understand what I feel at the present moment you should try to place yourselves in my position. (*Loud cheers.*)

"You call upon us—and I am perfectly convinced you all do so in perfect good faith—you call upon us to maintain order, and at the same time you deprive us of the means of doing so! (*New and prolonged cheering, murmurs on some benches on the Left.*)

"For myself, you will allow me to claim that I am in earnest, and that what I do I do in earnest. A result is required of me, and I repeat it, the means of obtaining it are withheld.

"I recognize the enlightenment of our great cities, and I value it at its true worth; but you are not ignorant that in theory the democratic party has the upper hand; and that for this very reason it is daring; and in those towns where it counts a sufficient number of adherents it ends,

thanks to that audacity, by carrying everything before it.

"When, in a city like Marseilles, which no one can deny is a highly enlightened city, which is also a very rich city, and consequently deeply interested in the maintenance of order, it is found necessary to land 500 sailors from the ships in order to re-establish public order, which had been disturbed; when the Prefecture has to be taken by assault,—and do you know how?—with boarding-pikes (*sensation*), is it under such circumstances as these that we are asked to leave the administration of the great towns to the chances of an election?

"Gentlemen, I must say this cannot be agreed to. (*Hear! hear!*)

"I have the interest of my country and the accomplishment of the heavy responsibility with which you have charged me too much at heart to hesitate in declaring plainly, that if the article which you have just voted be not amended I cannot retain the burthen of power. (*Hear! hear! cheers.*)

"Gentlemen, no inconsistency if you please. We must not have inclinations in one direction and votes in another. Yes or no. Do you desire order? (*Yes, yes.*) The whole question lies there." (*Hear, hear.*)

M. Langlois raised some objections, but M. Thiers immediately returned to the tribune, and quoted instances of prefects defeated by mayors, and compelled to take refuge in barracks or railway stations, from whence they had to be rescued by main force. "I will never," said he, "pretend to dictate to this Assembly; but what you have done is to enfeeble all our efforts and to divide the party of order, at the very moment when we are collecting 100,000 men in order to put down a rebellious municipality."

The discussion was not renewed. The Chamber voted by sitting and standing. The *Journal Officiel* records the result in these words: "A large number of members voted in favour of the amendment."

If M. Thiers had said all that was in his mind, he would have defended the nomination of the mayors in all communes by the Government as a permanent measure, for all his predilections were in favour of the law of 1831. In 1863, when M. Jules Simon had defended the principle of electing mayors, in a speech which lasted through two sittings of the Corps Législatif, M. Thiers, by whose side he sat, said to him when he had concluded: "You should have limited yourself to requiring the Government to appoint from among the municipal council; that is the only thing

practicable. You are acquainted with all the details of the question, but you have never governed."

Great authority though M. Thiers undoubtedly was, government with elected mayors is practicable at ordinary times, and laws are made for ordinary times, and not for periods of civil war. The sincere Liberals who, at this sitting of the 8th April, strove that great principles should prevail, had in some sort chosen the day, the hour, and the minute when defeat was most certain. Reasons were all in their favour, but circumstances were all against them. Not only Paris, but Lyons, Marseilles, Toulouse, and other less important towns, were contending with the Central Government, and demanding autonomy and federation.

They wanted to elect their own mayors, and to make of them so many presidents of republics. Even in those towns which remained obedient to the central power, the municipal councils appointed delegates to convey to Versailles their wishes to the Government and the Assembly; they contemplated the holding of congresses to insist upon the reconciliation of "the Versaillais" with the Commune. M. Thiers went direct to the point before the Assembly, and he was right in saying, "Your desires point one way, and your votes the other." Such was the great and singular parliamentary day of the 8th April.

It was everywhere said that the Chamber did not dare withstand M. Thiers, and that it yielded to him. The plain truth is that on both sides men gave way before the inexorable necessities of the situation.

M. Magnin and M. Bethmont had brought in a bill intended to regulate the functions of councils-general (*conseils-generaux*). This bill was very liberal, as might have been expected from the names and antecedents of its two authors. The report upon it, ably made by M. Waddington, occasioned prolonged and very serious discussions. On this occasion also the Chamber proved itself truly liberal, and on many points more liberal than the Government. M. Thiers took no personal share in the debate, but M. Lambrecht, who had succeeded M. Picard as Minister of the Interior, and who was fully in the confidence of M. Thiers, opposed, more than once, and with much judgment and discrimination, the decentralizing tendencies of the Commission and of the Assembly. The Right, who reckoned upon always having the majority in the councils-general, were very tenacious of their privileges, and M. Langlois went so far as to say that France had never had a more liberal Assembly. It was undoubtedly liberal after its fashion and in its degree. It sought to influence the elections by the composi-

tion of the electoral colleges, so as to secure the success of Conservative candidates; but when the elections had taken place, it thought only of defending those who had been elected against the Government.

A similar tendency to restriction is to be found in all the electoral enactments of the Assembly, and a similar liberal tendency in all its organic laws. At the outset, in addition to hatred of the Republic, deep-seated resentment directed against the Republic and every species of dictatorship exercised paramount influence. The hate of Cæsarism was strong in it, and often inspired it with generous resolutions. Afterwards a kinder feeling towards the empire revived, and by this reconciliation it lost a little of its early enthusiasm for liberty; but during the first two years of its long legislative career, it often gave way to its ardent desire to react against the customs of the imperial dictatorship. Nor was it less irritated by what it termed the dictatorship of the Government of Defence. Possibly, the necessity of restricting the powers which it had entrusted to M. Thiers may have begun to be felt; for the tendencies of all assemblies, especially sovereign assemblies, lie in this direction. M. Thiers and the Government were, on the other hand, at that very moment, excessively anxious about the

national unity and the authority of the central power.

The Act relative to councils-general was passed on the 10th August, 1871. It forms a very complete law, extremely well thought out, notwithstanding the perturbation during which it was framed, and many of its provisions are excellent. It introduced among us the institution of the departmental commission, which has long been in successful operation in Belgium.

The first object of the Assembly was to place the existence of councils-general beyond any danger from the Government. It will be remembered that M. Gambetta had dissolved all the councils-general elected under the empire by decree; this measure had aroused great anger among the opponents of his policy, a feeling which had by no means calmed down when the bill came on for discussion. The commission actually proposed the absolute interdiction of dissolution by decree; a step which might entail most serious consequences in the absence of the Legislative Chambers. The two following articles embody the compromise which was agreed to.

"Art. 35. While the National Assembly is in session no council-general can be dissolved by the chief of the Executive; except under express obligation to give an account of the measure

to the Assembly at the earliest opportunity. In this case, the date of the new election is fixed by an act which also decides whether the departmental commission shall continue in office till the meeting of the new council-general, or authorizes the executive power to nominate another provisionally.

"Art. 36. During the interval between the sessions of the National Assembly, the Chief of the Executive may pronounce the dissolution of a council-general on grounds specially applicable to such council.

"The decree of dissolution shall state reasons.

"The decree cannot be issued as a general measure. It shall summon the electors of the department for the fourth Sunday after the date of its issue. The new council-general meets of right on the second Monday after the election, and appoints its departmental commission."

The act conferred upon all councils-general the right of verifying the elections of their members without appeal; a very important privilege which, so to speak, secured its autonomy. It decided that the council should elect annually, in the month of August, its president, one or more vice-presidents, and its secretaries, that it should regulate its own modes of procedure, and that its sittings should be public. The right of meeting

for an extraordinary session, not to extend beyond eight days, upon the written requisition of two-thirds of the members addressed to the president, was granted. Political resolutions were formally prohibited but resolutions upon all questions of economy and general administration were authorized; so were petitions, and memoranda upon the condition and requirements of the various public services in the department, which were to be addressed to the proper minister through the channel of the president.

Many other points of importance in the Act of the 18th August, 1871, might be indicated, but the measure which gives this law its character, and in which its historical value lies, is the establishment of the departmental commission. This innovation is by far the most considerable. It has been said, but with certain exaggeration, that in this measure was the whole act. To say this is to overlook the importance of some other provisions; as for example, that one which confers upon the councils the right of deciding upon the validity of their own elections, without appeal; or that which empowers them to hold an extraordinary session upon the requisition of two-thirds of the members; or that which prohibits their dissolution by any general measure. The first of these provisions led to such results that it was

not possible to maintain it; and it was repealed by the act of the 31st July, 1875, which transferred the right of deciding the validity of contested elections to the Council of State. But whatever the importance of the other changes made in the regulation of councils-general, it still remains true that the institution of permanent commissions has profoundly modified our administrative system, and that it is the greatest stride which has been made in the direction of decentralization since the commencement of the century.

M. Beulé gave some curious details relative to the origin of the permanent commission, in a speech delivered on the 2nd July, 1871.

"We were then at Bordeaux," said he, "in the midst of those painful deliberations from which peace, which was admitted to be essential, was ultimately to spring. We were awaiting the ratification of the preliminaries. The deputies of Maine-et-Loire held a private meeting, and drew up a proposal to form a permanent "Commission of Decentralization." We brought it to the lecture-room.

"As a rule the authors of a proposal have to run about to obtain signatures, and cannot always succeed; but on this occasion the paper had hardly been produced when we were obliged

to remove it, in order to keep the merit of our proposal for ourselves, otherwise it would have had 500 signatures to back it.

"Whence came this unanimity and eagerness? From this, that in the midst of the public woe, there was a hope, a purpose, which consoled France: she desired to revive, to become a nation once more, by resuming her responsibility, her rights, and the conduct of her own affairs."

The departmental commission is composed of not less than four or more than seven members, elected annually at the end of August, when the ordinary session terminates. The senior member acts as its chairman; M. Thiers was very positive that it should not elect the chairman, who might become a formidable rival to the authority of the prefect. The duties of the members are entirely honorary, the law does not even allow them travelling expenses.

The prefects and the various heads of departments are bound to furnish this commission with all the information it asks for relative to its business. The commission is empowered to entrust its own members with special duties, in reference to matters lying within the scope of its functions.

It acts in lieu of the prefect in respect of the opening and maintenance of the high roads, and

in checking the rates at which land valuations are made.

It may discharge any functions which the council-general may delegate to it, and is to state its opinion upon any matters which the prefect may refer to it. It has power of its own motion to call his attention to matters of importance to the department. It submits to the council proposals which in its judgment are calculated to be useful; it makes a condensed Report to that body upon the budget proposed by the prefect, and another on the loans of the commune, rates for special purposes, and the debts of each commune.

During the interval between the sessions it superintends the disbursement of the funds of the department.

The Commission certifies the condition of the records, and the public property in movables in the department. It assigns to each member of the council-general, and to the members of the other elected councils, the canton which he is to represent upon the revising council. It nominates the members of the boards of direction, in enterprises subsidized by the department.

The Legislative Commission wished to place the administration of the commune under the guardianship of the departmental commission. This was

given up at the third reading, but only because it was more convenient to wait until a bill regulating municipal functions had been passed. The competence of the commission is thus provisionally limited to departmental questions; but, such as it is, it exerts considerable influence in the department. It completely replaces the council of the prefect, which has become nothing more than a tribunal of first instance to consider matters in dispute. It had been feared that the authority and the prestige of the prefect would have been too sensibly diminished. Experience has shown that such fears were exaggerated. A capable prefect, who remains sufficiently long at the head of a department to know it thoroughly and to establish sound relations, will always retain preponderance in the executive, as the representative of the Government.

Should a contest take place between the departmental commission and the prefect, the council-general is at once called together. It may, if it thinks fit, replace the departmental commission by a new one. If it decides against the prefect, that high functionary's position at the head of the department becomes an impossible one.

The aim of the legislation of 1871 was to set the department free. It took pains to give to the

councils-general the upper hand in the administration of the department. It, however, jealously maintained national unity by reserving to the prefect the management of the interests of the State, and by carefully limiting the council-general to the management of the interests of the department, and thereby prohibiting it from interference in politics.

But politics enter into everything; do what we will, they make their appearance in every institution, and on all sides of them. The Act of 1871 had instituted public sittings. A public sitting soon becomes a political sitting. The Council had been authorized to pass resolutions on questions of administration or economy; these are pure politics, slightly if at all disguised in form. An act known as Tréveneuc's Act, passed on the 15th February, 1872, empowered the councils-general as a provisional measure to replace the National Assembly or the legislative Chambers, if irregularly dissolved, by an Assembly of delegates chosen from among themselves, in the proportion of two delegates to each council. Lastly, the Act relative to the organization of the Senate passed the 24th February, 1873, summons the members of councils-general, together with the deputies of the department, the members of the councils of arrondissements

and the representatives of the communes, to take a share in the election of senators. In this way councils-general grew into political bodies, little by little, and in the nature of things.

We need only quote here so much of the act referring to the Council of State, passed on 26th May, 1872, as relates to the nomination of councillors for ordinary duty. The Government wished to retain the privilege of nominating these, and its bill was drafted in this sense. As soon as the measure went into committee a considerable majority declared for election by the Assembly. The Select Committee was almost unanimously in favour of election. It had many interviews with M. Thiers and M. Dufaure, Minister of Justice, which resulted in the Government becoming convinced that it was impossible to win back the committee to the system, and deciding once more to make trial of an elected Council, this experiment having been already tried in 1848, and having at that time given good results, with an Assembly that was very prudent, very moderate, and willing to take men's qualifications into account quite as much as their opinions.

Many of those who were elected members of Council in 1848 and 1849, were members of the Assembly in 1871; among them M. Gauthier de

Rumilly, M. Chasseloup Laubat, M. Jules Simon, M. Rivet, M. Edouard Charton, M. de Jouvencel, M. Edmond Adam. "Strange to say," said M. Duvergier, "the supporters of Monarchical Government have spoken and voted in favour of the nomination of councillors by the legislative power, while the partisans of Republican institutions have maintained that this nomination ought to be reserved to the Executive." It is strange that he should have thought it strange. The monarchical Right favoured election because that very Right, though by no means liberal where individual freedom of action was concerned, was extremely liberal where it was a question of restraining the action of a Government which it felt was becoming increasingly favourable to the permanence of the Republican form. The secret of its conduct is its desire to control the elections in order to control the elected bodies, and through them the Government. Was the choice between nomination by the Executive and election by some constituency?—the Right was for election. Was it a question under what conditions the right of universal suffrage, and freedom of the press should be exercised?—it preferred restriction. The tendencies of the Left were just the reverse. While energetically defending the right of universal suffrage subject to control, and pub-

licity, it desired to place all necessary powers in the hands of a Government which was elected by and representative of the national will. There are persons who suppose that Republicans prefer a feeble and fettered Executive, but this is an idea which is disproved by history. What Republicans desire is that the Executive should be subject to election, and strictly limited to the discharge of its proper functions.

The Assembly of 1848, in which there was an immense majority of Republicans, did undoubtedly decide that the members of the Council of State should be elected, but this took place under a constitution which provided for only a single Chamber. Its idea was to make of the Council of State a political body discharging the functions of a second Chamber in certain respects. M. Vivien said as much in his report, and has on several occasions repeated the same statement from the tribune.

The constitution of 1848, which committed legislative power to one sole Assembly elected by universal suffrage, and executive power to a president similarly elected, intended to interpose an intermediate body between these two powers, which should lend them its support, give them the advantage of its information, diminish their responsibility by its own co-operation, facilitate

their relations with each other, and temper the action of the single Assembly if at times it were tempted to act rashly, also that of the possibly arbitrary administration.

The Council of State necessarily took a share in the preparation and drawing up of bills; the Government were obliged to consult it, and the Assembly was empowered to do so. But on the other hand, the majority of those republicans who in 1872 supported M. Thiers' Government were resolved, as was M. Thiers himself, to divide the legislative power into two Chambers, and to recall the Council of State to the two-fold capacity in which it had acted prior to 1848, as an administrative tribunal, and an adviser of the Government.

Regarded as a tribunal, it was natural that it should be appointed in the same manner as the other judicial tribunals; regarded as an adviser of the Government it seemed indispensable that it should be nominated by the Government itself. These were the grounds on which the Republicans, who moreover were far from being numerous, were acting.

The Right permitted themselves to be influenced by a desire—which they constantly displayed after the date of the act relative to the

Council of State—to get authority into their own hands, to interfere in administrative details, and to diminish day by day the freedom of action and the power of the President, which they ultimately proposed to overthrow. Indeed almost all parties allowed causes arising from the politics of the hour to guide their actions in this matter. The members of Council, if nominated by M. Thiers, would be Republicans. If nominated by the Assembly, that is to say, by the all-powerful Right, they would, like the Right, be hostile to a Republic.

Such were the motives which influenced the one side and the other; and the proof is to be found in the fact that on the 23rd February, 1875, the Assembly rescinded its decision without hesitation. At that date it was decided and almost unanimously, that Councillors of State should in future be nominated by the President of the Republic in Council (of Ministers). This was opposed by only forty-six members, almost all of them Bonapartists.

In France we are in the habit of looking upon the institution of the jury as one of the great achievements of the Revolution. We also hold that especially for political and press offences the jury is a salutary institution. It is indispensable that

the man who pronounces upon the fate of an accused person should be capable, upright, and impartial. If capability only, or even honesty, were all, a magistrate or a court of appeal offer sounder guarantees of these qualities than a jury. But impartiality is the characteristic which more than any other is represented by a jury, and it is above all in dealing with offences in matters of opinion (political and press offences) that impartiality becomes at once most difficult and most requisite.

The permanent position of a judge is regarded as a guarantee for his impartiality, and the importance of this guarantee should not be denied; but on the other hand, neither should it be over-estimated. The judge may not fear being dismissed, but he does fear not being promoted. He is not, therefore, in a truly independent position. Partiality also is of two kinds; the one voluntary, in which case it is criminal; the other involuntary, as in the case of a man devoted to a Government, or imbued with the spirit of a sect or caste, and honestly holding that everything which is contrary to his opinion or even his impressions is wrong.

Among the paradoxes of our legislation, the

following is by no means one of the least startling. We warmly advocate legality; we value the jury as the most genuine guarantee of the liberty of the individual; we especially value it in the case of offences of opinion; it formerly stood in our charters, and it was written in our constitution of 1848, that no man may be deprived of his natural judges, that exceptional tribunals shall not be established in the future; we endeavour to devise learned and complicated means of composing a jury that shall be truly independent and truly impartial. And after all this, we admit the state of siege as a really indispensable institution, one which the wisest, the most moderate, and the most liberal minds urgently demand, only requiring that resort should not be had to it except in pressing need. And yet we know from our former history and from contemporary history, that frequent recourse is had to this form of dictatorship, which ought to be reserved for the last extremity; and which, as its first result, deprives all accused persons of the benefit of jury, and, in a special way, those who are accused of offences of opinion. The state of siege subjects them to judges who are not their natural judges, who are not irremovable, who are temporarily commissioned to discharge the functions of judges, and who are

dispensed from all the qualifications required of ordinary magistrates. It was not till 1878, after the experience of the 16th May had once more demonstrated the dangers of dictatorship, that the idea of making the Executive competent to proclaim the state of siege when the Chambers are not sitting was given up. The act of the 3rd April, 1878, contains the following clause: No. 3. "Should the Chamber of Deputies be dissolved, and the General Elections be not yet completed, the President of the Republic shall not declare a state of siege even as a temporary measure. In the case of actual war, the President is, notwithstanding this, empowered, acting upon the opinion of his Council of Ministers, to declare the state of siege in that part of the country which is threatened by the enemy, subject to the condition that the electoral colleges are summoned to meet, and the Chambers are to reopen at the earliest possible date." The third article is thoroughly right; and owing to it, the Constitution has at last ceased to place a legal instrument wherewith to oppose the national will in the hands of the President of the Republic. This was not done too soon. Up to the 3rd April, 1878, the President possessed the power of dismissing the Cabinet and dissolving the Chamber, with the consent of the Senate, both guilty of holding an opinion of their

own which was the opinion of the country, but unfortunately not that of the President. He had power to postpone the elections for six months, and during those six months, while no voice can be heard from the tribune, while the legislative authority, which is also a controlling power, is not, he could place the judges under interdict, and suspend the action of those laws which defend individual liberty and the freedom of the press. Yet, strange to say, this third clause, so wise, so indispensable, which put an end to so flagrant and dangerous a contradiction, did not pass without a protest. No sooner was it made known in the Conservative camp that it formed a portion of the intention of the Parliamentary majority to resolve that for the future an act would have to be passed in order to suspend the authority of any law, than anger and disappointment made themselves visible. What, during the entire period which might elapse between the expiration of the powers of one Chamber, and the formation of a new one, it would for the future be impossible to indulge us with the amenities of a state of siege by proclamation! During this entire interval the Government would be reduced to employ the civil authorities and the ordinary courts of law for the purpose of securing obedience to the law? Nothing more could be done if disturbances broke

out beyond sending a few regiments to the spot! Were we not paving the way for some future Commune, if we disarmed the party of order to this extent? General elections at regular intervals, regulated by the expiration of the time for which the deputies are chosen, did not cause much uneasiness, what did so were general elections in consequence of a dissolution, as happened on the 16th May.

All those who arrogate to themselves the title of men of moderation, of Liberals, and who represent themselves as constituting the party of order, were clamorous for an exception to this third clause. If they obtained no other, this one exception at least must be granted to them. And in favour of whom? Of the President who shortly before had prematurely dissolved the Chamber of Deputies with the consent of the Senate. That act, which sends back the representatives to the sovereign people, empowers the President —who by the dissolution has become one of the parties to a great suit before the tribunal of national justice—to become dictator, at any rate until the long trial of that suit has been concluded. Is this merely inconsiderateness? Is it due to want of foresight? Or is it quite the contrary?

So long as the power of proclaiming the state of

siege by simple decree lasted, the jury was not fully secured to us, for we only possessed the jury and what are called our "natural" judges at intervals. But now that we possess that institution continuously and without these grievous interruptions, it is important that it should be well provided for, so as to secure capacity, character, and above all impartiality, that is, the cause of the institution of the jury is the presumption that a judge may be biassed.

Every act regulating juries since they were first introduced has required that four different lists shall be made out. 1. A general list of all citizens legally liable to serve on a jury. 2. The annual list, extracting from the general list the names of those citizens who are liable to serve as jurors during that year. 3. The sessions list taken from the above-named annual list. 4 The list of jurors summoned, extracted from the sessions list; that is to say, general list, annual list, sessions list, jury list, for each case.

In 1848 it was enacted that all electors over thirty years of age should be entered on the general jury list. This was on the general principle that every citizen unless incapacitated has a right to take part in the administration of justice, just as he has a right, by electing

deputies to take part in the formation of the law and the government of the country. Law being the expression of the general will, it appears natural that each person who has a share in the making of the law shall be liable to be called upon to punish those who refuse to submit to it.

This principle is not beyond question. The right of voting is the only right inseparable from citizenship, beyond that it is only indispensable that all men should be on an equality in the sight of the law. Duties therefore can be, and should be so distributed as to conduce to the general interest. Briefly, the right of trying one's peers is a very doubtful one, that of being tried by one's peers is not so. If there were an inherent right to sit on a jury, the only course would to be select the juries for each case by lot from the lists of electors. Something like this was proposed to the Assembly by the Government of 1848; but so long ago as that the Assembly recognized that the only right existing was that of the accused person to be tried rationally and justly, that is to say, before a competent, honest, impartial tribunal. The reporter made use of the following words:— "That sovereign power which belongs to a jury must only be entrusted to men of sufficient enlightenment and character to leave us no doubt

that they will employ it prudently; men of sufficient enlightenment to be able to distinguish between the innocent and the guilty, of sufficient firmness to remain untrammeled by impressions from without, or by the prejudices of party spirit, and to resist persuasion, and pity." A magnificent programme indeed, but one impossible of complete realization. The duty of the legislator is to approach as closely as he can to such an ideal. Everything depends upon the method of drawing up the list for the year. What has to be done besides, is, so to speak, mechanical. Every elector of thirty years of age, and not incapacitated, has his name entered on the list, and two ballots obtain the list of jurors liable to serve and the names of each actual juror out of the annual list. But the list of the year cannot be drawn up according to an undeviating rule, or by drawing names out of a ballot-box. A selection has to be made, and very many names have to be struck out. This selection should be made without party-spirit, with the single object of inserting the names of enlightened and honourable men in the list. If the authority to which the solution is entrusted be one which can be relied upon for impartiality and discretion, the law of the jury is a good one. What remains may have its own importance, but the fundamental point is

the one indicated. In it also lies the main difficulty.

The system to be pursued, according to the act of 7th August, 1848, was as follows :—"The number of jurors to be provided for the annual list was divided among the various cantons in proportion to the numbers of jurors furnished by each to the general list. The prefect with his prefectoral council made this division. The jurors from each canton whose names were to appear on the list for the year were nominated by a committee consisting of a member of the council-general who presided, a magistrate (*juge de paix*) who was real president, with two members of the Municipal Council from each commune in the canton, especially nominated by that council, or with five members of the Municipal Council in those cantons which comprised only one single commune. The prefect then framed the annual jury list of the department by simply arranging the names which appeared on the cantonal lists in alphabetical order, without introducing any alteration whatever.

The characteristics of this system were bad, the executive authority was absolutely excluded. The elective element had the chief, or to speak more properly, the sole place. For both these

reasons the Empire did not find it possible to maintain this system. An act of 4th June, 1853, enacted that the list for the year should be drawn up in the manner following. The number of jurors is divided among the cantons by the prefect sitting in prefectoral council in proportion to the official statement of population. For each canton a committee consisting of the magistrate as president, and all the mayors, draw up a preliminary list containing three times as many names as will form the contingent which the canton is to supply, and the final list for the arrondissement, as settled by a subsequent committee consisting of all the judges, is prepared like the district list for division by the prefect or sub-prefect. This commission was increased or diminished to the extent of one fourth the jurors assigned to each canton.

The characteristic of this act is that it completely excludes the electoral element. No man can appear on the final list whose name is not on that drawn up for his canton. Now the lists for the cantons were drawn up by a committee consisting of the magistrates (*juges de paix*) and of all the mayors; in other words, a committee of officials, for under the Empire the mayors were nominated by the Government, and need not be

members of the municipal council, they were therefore not elected magistrates. The committee of the arrondissement likewise includes officials only, since it consists of the magistrates under the presidency of the prefect or sub-prefect. Nor was it any safeguard that these judges are functionaries engaged in the administration of justice; for independently of the fact that they are removable, their having to act under the presidency of the prefect or sub-prefect reduced them to a secondary position. Here then we have the act of 1848 reversed, and everything placed in the hands of the executive. The Committee of the legislative body proposed to replace the magistrates by members of the council-general in the committees of each arrondissement. This amendment was rejected. "If," said M. Rouher, "the council of state has not appointed members who have been elected, the reason is that the law under discussion is one affecting the administration of justice; what was requisite was that it should be framed under conditions of stability and of vigour; the political element, which is always subject to agitation and change, ought not therefore to be allowed to enter into it." To say that politics are excluded from the commissions over which the Government is absolute master is a mere farce.

Nor is it less ridiculous to base the objections to members of a council-general upon a political character, which neither in law or in fact belongs to them. But at that time men were not nice as to the arguments they made use of, above all when addressing the legislative body.

The unquestionable merit of the act of the 21st November, 1872, was that it excluded the direct agents of the Government from any share in making out the annual lists. M. Dufaure, who drafted this act, agreed to the introduction of the elective element which the Empire had banished; but instead of resorting to this alone, he entrusted so considerable a share to the magistracy, that the introduction of the elective principle was virtually destroyed. His plan, which the Assembly adopted, borrows from the act of 1851 the drawing up of a preparatory list, and the right of the commission to increase or diminish the number of jurors allotted to each canton by one fourth. This commission is even empowered to enter jurors on the final list whose names had not been included in the preliminary lists, with the restriction that these names shall not amount to more than one fourth of the number allotted to the canton. The committees for the cantons consist of the magistrate as president, his

assistants, and of the mayors of all the communes. The mayors form the elective element; even in the case of a mayor of a principal city, for they are always selected from among the number of the Municipal Council. The committee for an arrondissement is composed of the members of the council-general, the magistrates, with the president of the civil tribunal as president. This constitution was keenly attacked during the discussion. It was pointed out that in 1872 the entire power had been conferred upon the judicial element in the committee, as in 1848 it had been conferred upon the elective, and in 1853 upon the Government element. The character of the law is not really altered, although the judicial element does not preponderate in the committee of the canton, for the committee of the canton only performs preliminary work; and, according to the situation of the canton and the number of communes in it, it is sometimes in a minority and sometimes in a majority, the juror is really elected by the committee of the arrondissement. In that committee the magistrates not only preponderate but also preside; so that in reality, recording their votes in the chief towns, under the eye of the president of the tribunal, and in the close vicinity of the Procureur of the Republic, who is at their head, they have the list absolutely in their own

hands. The act makes provision that the President of the tribunal shall have a casting vote, but this casting vote is not needed by him, for he preponderates in the commission by his mere presence. It might be said that the members of the council-general are there only as a matter of form.

M. Lepère, speaking in the name of the Left, called for a return to the system of 1848, but in vain. The Chamber, at the request of the Chancellor, consented that the nomination of jurors should rest with the magistrature. M. Bertauld declared, but to no purpose, that this was a baneful privilege. Of the three stages in a criminal prosecution, the preliminary examination, the conviction, the sentence, the first and the last devolve upon the magistrates; and it is not in accord with either justice or reason that they should also be empowered to select the jurors who are to pronounce the verdict. In short, the act of 1872 is preferable to that of the Empire, but it calls for an essential reform in the direction of liberty.

When the Assembly passed an act (that of 21st December, 1871,) to regulate the procedure in the election of the judges for tribunals of commerce, a question of principle came before it for solution. Have traders the right to elect

their own judges? The reply, as in the discussion on jury law, was that traders, and in general all litigants, have one right—that of justice, administered by competent, upright, and impartial judges. It is, however, noteworthy that the parallel between litigants at common law and litigants before a tribunal of commerce is inexact; for in the last-mentioned case it is not so much a question of deciding between right and wrong as of the interpretation of the conditions of a contract.

The legislation of 1807 placed the selection of judges in commercial cases in the hands of the "notables commerçants," who were designated by the prefect under the authority of the Minister of the Interior, for whom a Minister of Commerce was afterwards substituted. In 1848 the institution of "notables commerçants" had ceased to exist, and the judges were elected directly by the whole body of licensed traders. The Empire restored the act of 1807. In 1871 the government proposed to revive the act of 1848, with but few alterations. The commission thought that good judges would not be obtained by direct voting. The number of licencees is too great, there are a hundred thousand in Paris; the elections would become political, and the interests of commerce, which the legislation ought specially

to keep in view, would be sacrificed. Holders of licences of the first class, who are the best educated, would find themselves overwhelmed by the number of licencees of the seventh and eighth class, who would virtually have the election in their hands; two figures will suffice to prove this. In 1871 there were 26,000 licences of the first class, and 250,000 of the seventh. The commission for this reason gave up direct universal suffrage, and decided to entrust the selection of the judges to a small number of electors taken from among the traders, as had been done in 1807. But the drawing up of the list of these electors was entrusted to a commission composed almost exclusively of traders, who had been elected to fill some post, for example, as members of the tribunal of commerce, or of the chamber of commerce, or council of experts, with the addition of three members of the council-general, and of the mayor of the chief town. The government gave up its original proposal, adopted this suggestion, and the Assembly confirmed it by vote. M. Magnin and M. Tirard opposed the fundamental principle of the bill. "You separate the traders into two classes," said M. Magnin: "on one side you place those who are fit to choose their own judges, on the other side those who are unfit." This principle is indeed open to discus-

sion, but the Chamber would not recognize the right of traders to elect their judges, just as, on another occasion, it would not recognize the right of electors to be jurors. In both cases recourse was had to the creation of a commission invested with electoral functions. In the latter case the committee was better constituted than in the former, and practically it may be said of the one and the other, that the worth of the committee is the worth of the enactment.

The act on recruiting for the army was not voted until the 27th July, 1872, for two months had been consumed in discussing it, and the committee had spent no less than fourteen months in elaborating it. It consists of eighty articles, some of them of the greatest importance. It was no longer a question of some fresh modification of the act of the 10th March, 1818, an act which formed the basis of the one of 1832, and of all that have succeeded it. Drawing by lot, and the purchase of substitutes, were now replaced by compulsory personal service: a revolution at once in our army, and in our habits.

Some few supporters of the lot still remained: substitution could claim a larger, but still not a great number. But these defenders of the old routine were much discouraged, and felt themselves beaten beforehand. Although that proportion of

the contingent of each year, which should be required for military duty, was determined by lot, and the contract between the substitute and the conscript whom he replaced, was purely voluntary, and consequently conformable to the wishes of both parties, such an arrangement was too much opposed to the principle of equality to last for any length of time together with universal suffrage. A more telling and more pressing reason was that Prussia had just beaten us; with her military service is compulsory, and we adopted the weapon which she had employed against us. The act of 1855 had struck a decisive blow at substitution by creating a relief-from-service fund which had filled the French army with mercenaries. The difficulty was, not to enact that personal service should be obligatory, but to organize it, and that difficulty was considerable.

Two systems presented themselves; some persons advocated a term of eight years' active service in the army; with, as a consequence, many cases of exemption and release from service; for no one could dream of permanently embodying the entire contingent of seven classes; others would not consent to more than a three years' term of active service. On the one side and on the other were to be found sound reasons, high authority, and remarkable obstinacy.

M. Thiers had advocated eight years, or at the very shortest seven years. General Changarnier, General Ducrot, and the majority of military men agreed with him in preferring, if not this exact term, at least a long period of service.

The short term of service was advocated by Generals Trochu, Guillemaut, and Billot, and the authority of General Lamoricière could also be advanced in its favour.

Their arguments were of two kinds; some were exclusively military, others of a political character. The profession of arms can be very well learned in six months in the case of an infantry soldier, and in one year in that of some special branches of the service; a soldier in his second year is a good soldier; in his third year he is an excellent soldier. If he is kept longer he begins to feel a dislike to the service. With a three years' term each entire class of recruits may be kept in active service, and then you have a reserve consisting of soldiers thoroughly trained, and all equally serviceable, while under the other system the reserve, composed of men who are not sufficiently instructed and drilled, is completely sacrificed. To these military arguments, were added others based upon political and social considerations. It is a glaring inconsistency and a breach of all the laws of equality to proclaim the

principle that military service shall be personal and compulsory, and then practically to divide the classes into two portions, one part to be subjected through a long series of years to all the duties of military service, to be removed from family and business life, prevented from marrying, hindered from selecting or preparing for any civil career; while the others are at once, or almost at once, sent back to their homes, and though liable to recall in case of war, remain in the enjoyment of all the liberties and rights of citizens. In order to establish so wide and so inequitable a division among young men of the same class, it will be necessary to have recourse, on the one hand, to the lottery, which will be almost tantamount to re-establishing the conscription, inasmuch as good numbers and bad numbers will once more exist; and, on the other to resort to an entire system of exemptions and permissions, which will render the law illusory in the case of favoured persons, and friends of those in power, and thus tend to destroy its moral effect. These reasons, and others which it is not necessary to repeat here, produced a great effect upon the Republican portion of the Assembly.

The reply to them was as follows:—

True, a soldier's business can be quickly learned. An intelligent man does not require even so much

as six months thoroughly to master his drill. But a man who only knows his drill may be a good National guard, he is not a soldier. A soldier is a man inured to discipline, to the point of obeying it naturally, and without effort; he bears privation and fatigue; he braves danger, nay, in action he courts it; and, what is more difficult and more heroic, he awaits danger without trembling, motionless and alone. Such a soldier is not made in six months, nor yet in twelve. It will take years thus to train his will, to strengthen his muscles, to inspire his courage. Nothing but time, hardship, life in common with his comrades, the trooper's wandering life, transplanted from garrison to garrison, can transform the clumsy ignorant peasant, attached to his village and to his routine, into an alert and active soldier, full of honour and vigour, holding "the religion of the flag," and looking upon his regiment as a family.

M. Thiers was never tired of repeating, that, however numbers may contribute to success, moral worth contributes more efficaciously, and more surely. A small army of good soldiers well commanded, is worth more than a great crowd of indisferent soldiers who can neither obey, nor stand fire and fatigue; and a veteran soldier equally incapable of advancing without orders and of retreating

without leave, is preferable to a man whose undisciplined courage impels him to inopportune acts of daring, and who may endanger the army as well as himself. "The strength of an army," said M. Thiers, "lies in its solidity and its cohesion. The men must be 'knit together' said the Duke d'Aumale; it was the phrase of a soldier and a commander.

"If three years' service be not enough to turn out a soldier, still less is it enough to turn out a sub-officer. We shall always have officers, for we have good schools and sound laws which secure their position to the officers, and give them a career. A good cadre of sub-officers is more difficult to obtain, because the sub-officers have neither security in their position nor liberty in their mode of life, nor have they sufficient pay, consideration, and honours in proportion to their services. Yet there cannot be a good army without good sub-officers. They are essential in order to make good soldiers, and when they have made them, are still essential to uphold and direct them. They are indispensably necessary for the reserve, and as instructors, guides, examples. Perhaps a sergeant, or even a sergeant-major may be made in three years, but," said M. Thiers, "what will be the good of having made him, if so soon as he is trained and promoted he leaves us?"

On this question he was intractable. It was his belief that if the term of service were shortened the security of France would be endangered. He maintained that war, or at least successful war, had never been made with recruits. The example of the German Landwehr notwithstanding, he had no belief, or very little, in the utility of reserves. He saw this great difference between our army of reserve, and that of our neighbours, that with us the reserve men are quite unacquainted with their officers, up to the opening of the campaign, while the German officers, owing to the continued existence of seignorial authority, are to their soldiers recognized chiefs. He was persuaded that if on the breaking out of a war the reserves were called out, the whole of the fresh men would have to be left in their depôts to be drilled, and that it would imperil the steadiness of the regiments of the active army if they were drafted into it.

All this complicated organization, an imperfect imitation of the German system, seemed to him to be at once of little worth and very costly. The millions thus expended, he maintained, would have been far better employed in reinforcing the active army, either by improving its conditions or increasing its effective strength. While the bill was under consideration not a day passed without

his seeing some member of the Committee, that he might bring him over to his ideas. Again and again he spoke at the sittings of the Committee, and each time he adduced fresh arguments, and when he had not carried his points, came away full of fresh regrets. He obtained neither the eight years' term, which indeed he did not venture to propose, although, as he said, it was the traditional figure and the one which had given us our best armies, nor yet the seven years, for which he fought hard. He at last brought the Committee to declare by a majority for five years, a majority it is true, of only one vote, but it seemed to lift a great weight from off him. "It is far enough from my ideal," said he, "but with five years' service we shall have two, or possibly even three years' classes ready for service, and we shall be able to form good cadres." He pledged himself to the Committee, to support the proposal, and he did support it; in fact, while declaring each time that it was a *pis-aller*, and that had he had his own way he would have taken seven or even eight contingents of 100,000 men each. To the last moment the vote was doubtful, notwithstanding his efforts, and the appeals of General Changarnier, who told the Committee "not to abate one single hour." Finally, having for the last time repeated all his arguments, quoted his

authorities, and corrected miscalculations, M. Thiers brought forward the question of his continuing to govern. And when cries of "You have no right to do it! You cannot resign! France has need of you," were heard on all hands,—he made this firm reply,—

"We are all free here, I as much as you, and I ought to be more so, for I bear a crushing responsibility.

"If the act is a bad one, in two or three years you will have a right to blame me, as you have had a right to blame those who so lightly declared war.

"I take my stand upon that. I declare to you that I shall leave this Chamber deeply distressed if you do not vote for five years. I add that I could not accept the responsibility of carrying out the act (*exclamations, and murmurs*).

"You must take this declaration as you think fit; it was my duty, and within my right to make it to you."

It is difficult without having witnessed it to form an idea of the excitement to which these words gave rise. This military question had been suddenly transformed into a political one. A division was taken upon an amendment of General Chareton, who proposed to reduce the term to four years. It was lost by 477 votes to 56. There were 192 members who did not vote.

This was a personal triumph for M. Thiers, but it was bought very dear. He had the pain of perceiving as time went on how unpopular the five years' service was. In 1876 and 1877, many bills, originated by private members, proposed a return to the term of three years. At that time, though not exactly ill, he was enfeebled; his mind was always clear and bold, but his voice was gone, and he could no longer hope to make himself heard in a building which was deficient in acoustic quality, and by an Assembly which would have listened to him with the deepest personal respect, but with real hostility to his doctrine. A week before his death he said to M. Jules Simon, "I shall speak but once more; that shall be to oppose the reduction of the term of active service in the army. I will do it, were I to die in the tribune. I owe that to my country." Some months before, when M. Jules Simon was in the Ministry, he had asked him, in discussing the same subject, if he would consent to read a speech for him, as he had once before done. "I am aware," said he, "that it is contrary to custom, but it is not contrary to rule. They will perhaps allow me this privilege, and then I shall be able to say everything."

We have just seen under what conditions the act of 1872 was carried; we will now give a

short abstract of its provisions as the debate left them.

Personal military service is due from every Frenchman, and he is liable to be called out from the age of twenty years to that of forty.

Substitution is suppressed. Exchange of numbers is sanctioned only between brothers.

The entire term of military service is subdivided as follows:—Five years in active service, four years in the army reserve, five years in the territorial army, six years in the territorial army reserve.

Each contingent is therefore incorporated completely into the army for active service, and remains there five years, afterwards passing successively into the army reserve and into the territorial army.

There are in the army 120,000 men independent of the levies. This number comprises officers, gensdarmes, enlisted men, &c. Each class consists of about 300,000 men, of whom not more than one-half, say 150,000 men, are fit for service. The latter number multiplied by five makes 750,000 men, and gives us, with the 120,000 just mentioned, an active army of 870,000 men. It is impossible in the state of our finances, dangerous to national labour, and, it would appear, needless for the defence of the country, to keep up so

large an army in time of peace. It therefore has been resolved to separate each class into two equal divisions; of these one is to remain five years in the services, and the other, without ceasing to form part of the active army, and while liable to recall to the ranks should war break out, is sent home with indefinite leave of absence, and can there exercise all the rights of citizenship, the right of voting and the right of contracting marriage. The division between these two parts of a same class, so unequally treated, is made by drawing lots. Thus the active army consists of 870,000 men, but according to the terms of the act, there cannot in time of peace be a larger number of men on active service than the 120,000 permanent soldiers, the 150,000 men of the class last called out, and 75,000 men for each of the previous classes, giving a total of 570,000 men. Even this number is practically reduced, for as General Trochu said, in the discussion, "It is understood that we are asked for five years, in order that four may be taken from us." In fact, partly to decrease the severity of the enactment, and partly to reduce the charges on the Treasury, the men of the first part of the class are sent home with indefinite leave of absence after having served for three years, and for similar reasons the men of the second division who might

legally be kept a year are only detained six months. Consequently, all deductions made, we keep up an active army of 495,000 men during six months, and only 420,000 men during the other six months. On a war footing the entire strength of the active army and of the reserve would amount to not less than 1,470,000 men drawn from nine classes, which, added to the eleven classes of the territorial army, and of the second reserve, would appear to represent 3,000,000 of fighting men, but many reductions would have to be made. It is not to be expected that more than eight classes could be placed in the field; the vacancies occasioned by sickness and deaths must be deducted, and the proportion of these vacancies increases rapidly, as earlier classes are called out. This organization, which dates from the close of 1872, and which the country has resolutely kept up for five years, secures us, we are entitled to assert, a very formidable military force, both active and reserve.

In the debate M. Keller maintained that the total number in each class did not reach 300,000 men, and he quoted years in which it had fallen much below those figures. An incident enlivened this necessarily dry discussion. M. Keller had just quoted the large figure of the class of 1868. "That," he said, "does honour to the second

Republic." During the laugh which followed, M. Grévy, who was in the chair, whispered a few words to the speaker, and M. Keller resumed with a pleasant air, "The President promises me that the third shall be equally successful." This time the hilarity was general. Yet the remark had really a serious side, the debased morals which were introduced by the Empire are among the chief causes which have retarded the growth of the population. The bad years referred to by M. Keller, correspond to the years of cholera, famine, war. We shall not indeed have 300,000 men in 1890! in ordinary times that figure is always exceeded. Only the half of a class is reckoned available, allowing for young men unfit for military service, from bodily infirmities, or insufficient height, those who are already enlisted and are included among the 120,000 permanent soldiers, and those who are exempted. Postponements in calling out men do not count as a diminution of the effective force, for their result is the transfer of men from one class to another, so that the effect is equal.

The question of exemptions is, in some sense, a corollary of the main question of the term of active service. The total number being determined by what the budget will bear, this question reduces itself to a decision between reaching that number, by taking fewer soldiers from each class

for a longer term of years, or more soldiers for a shorter term. In other words, if the army is to consist under all circumstances of 500,000 men, not more than 100,000 men should be taken if they are kept five years, while if they are only kept three years 170,000 men should be taken. As a result, those who restrict the term of service, restrict, at the same time, the number of exemptions. It is maintained that this is an advantage, since the action of the law is thus rendered more vigorous, more equitable and more in accordance with the principle from which it is derived.

The five years' term having prevailed, the cases of exemption admitted by the Act are rather numerous. Certain relaxations which are not exemptions but only facilities are also introduced. All these departures from the rigour of the principles of the act concern four classes of young men; those upon whom families are dependent; those who in their profession render important services to the State and cannot be taken from their callings without injury to the public interests; those intending to pursue the liberal professions; and lastly, those operatives who could not be at once removed from their workshops or places of business without serious inconvenience. The Assembly, in granting these modifications, yielded in the case of those who have to support

families, to the interests of humanity; to the good of the State in the case of professors, ministers of religion of various denominations, and students of theology; and finally, in the case of aspirants to liberal professions, manufacturers, foremen, traders, to a desire to avoid rendering the act odious, and to the very pressing necessity of not injuring national education and labour. It was well said, that in order to make an army we must not unmake the nation.

Those who support families, professors, and students of theology, are the only classes to whom exemptions, properly so called, are granted; the others receive either postponements of their summons, which may be renewed from year to year till the age of twenty-four years, or leave to enlist themselves for one year voluntarily before the class to which they belong is called out.

These regulations, which were unquestionably severe, have been keenly criticized.

The year of voluntary service constitutes a real favour, since the enlisted volunteer escapes the drawing by lot, and the chance of remaining five years in the service. This favour is not given arbitrarily, it must be won and indeed paid for. The objects of it produce a diploma or a certificate that they have finished their studies; they pass an examination, equip themselves at their own expense,

and pass an entire year in a regiment. At the expiration of their year of service they undergo another examination, and may be retained in the corps for a second year, at the discretion of the colonel, if they do not pass; or even, in very grave cases, placed by order of the Minister among those in the first category of the effective force, and consequently liable to the five years' term of service.

It was objected that military service was thereby transformed into a penalty, which might have to be undergone. The Assembly turned a deaf ear to these complaints. Not only the volunteers for one year, but also the young soldiers, who, having drawn good numbers, have but one year of service, must pass an examination before their discharge, and if they are bad soldiers, or have not learned to read and write, they are kept with the regiment.

Far from blaming this regulation (Clause 41), we think it does great honour to the act of 27th July, 1872. It must be taken together with Clause 69, which is as follows: "Young men called out to join the army under the present act receive in their regiments and according to their rank the instruction prescribed by the Minister of War, in addition to the training necessary for the service."

Thus these young men receive instruction; and if at the end of one year they have not learned to read and write, they are kept with the corps for a second year. This is compulsory education, written for the second time upon the French statute book, it having been originally adopted in the act of 1841, regulating the employment of children in factories. It is invariably rejected when presented in its proper form; it has always found acceptance when presented as an incidental feature of a military or an industrial enactment.

This idea of making the army one great school recurred again and again during the debate. M. d'Audriffet Pasquier, speaking of the army recruiting bill, long before it was brought in, stated that military service would be made compulsory, and that the army would become a school at once of authority and of equality. This idea is both elevated and just. Our sons, called together under our flag to perform duties in common and meet common perils, ought to learn to estimate one another at their several worth, independently of all social prejudices or conventionalities, and to owe submission only to the natural superiority conferred by age, talents, or service; they ought also during their term of service to acquire instruction, or to perfect that

which they have received. Two things are needful, that the army contribute to the spread of education, and that education contribute to the improvement of our army.

No entirely illiterate man is likely to make a good soldier. "How can we teach our recruits," said General Guillemaut, "to understand, compare and measure distances, and manage their arms rightly, if one fourth of them do not know how to read or write, and the other three-fourths hardly know what a kilometer is? How can we train our cavalry to reconnoitre accurately, if half the men are incapable of reading a map, or noting the roads, bridges, railways, valleys, or mountains?" And it might also be asked, how can patriotism, honour, duty, be learned by half-civilized men? General Trochu said, and very wisely, "To make an army, we must remake the nation." General Ladmirault also remarked, "The Prussian system has succeeded, because there were in the spirit and in the life of the nation the principles and bases of education, by which alone noble sentiments are developed. For this reason we say, that the question is less that of the number of months or years during which our young men shall be kept in the service, than that of the education, and the mind of the nation.

Prussia understood all this thoroughly after

Jena! Stein reorganized the administration, Sharnhorst reorganized the army, Humboldt reorganized the system of teaching, and Fichte the philosopher went through the various towns and provinces, waking up honour and patriotism by his glowing orations, but above all preaching a reform in the education of the nation. In 1872 we set ourselves to follow in the footsteps of Sharnhorst: we ought also to have imitated Humboldt and Fichte. Austrian patriots said to M. Jules Simon when he travelled through Austria after Sadowa, "It is the schoolmaster who has beaten us."

No man insisted more strongly than General Trochu on the necessity of instruction in the army, and by the army. "Nothing is being done in this direction," said he. "Everything you are asking for is being done," was the reply of General de Cissey and M. Thiers. The discussion was brisk and warm; it is to be found in the report of the sitting of June 6th.

General Trochu. "With the exception of the ordinary daily fatigue parties, and of certain barrack duties for which small bodies of men can be detailed, no occupation is pursued in common except military drill.

"Of those exercises which ought to take place every day, and into which it is so easy

to introduce emulation, such as gymnastics for which no apparatus is requisite, races, wrestling, leaping-matches, there are, generally speaking none.

General de Cissey. "Yes, there are."

General Trochu. "The construction of earth-works, which would teach every soldier to handle the pick and the shovel, and render it possible for our infantry to throw up entrenchments quickly in time of war, is not practised."

General de Cissey. "Yes, it is."

General Trochu. "If the officers held meetings, at which the men would be instructed in their duty to their country, their duties towards themselves, and the greatness of their mission. . . ."

General de Cissey. "I beg your pardon, such meetings are held every day."

General Trochu. "Meetings in which the men might be told the history of their own regiments, the feats of war in which they have borne a part, and gained distinction, with the names which ought to be traditions;—these are never thought of.

"At Grenoble I found that in the thirty-sixth of the line, commanded by Colonel, now General Champion, almost all the men could read. My astonishment was great. I inquired, how so many men had been taught to read at once.

'Well, it was by the methods which I am constantly urging; by work, and by emulation introduced into that work.'

"The colonel conceived the idea of appointing each man among his soldiers who could read, monitor, and teacher of reading, to one or two illiterate soldiers. The lessons were given in the barrack-rooms, the men sitting on their beds, the monitor with his pupils round him; each monitor teaching in any manner which suggested itself to his mind.

"I have seen this regimental school for mutual instruction at work."

General de Cissey. "This is now done daily in every regiment.

M. Thiers. "Everywhere! We have the reports from the colonels."

General Trochu spoke of the army which he had known, M. Thiers and General Cissey of the army which they had just made.

M. Thiers, in the sitting of the 12th June, dwelt upon the results which had been obtained, and if anything can compensate us for keeping a force of 460,000 men under arms in time of peace, and for the greater misfortune that 75,000 men in the flower of their youth are annually withdrawn for five years from agriculture and industry, these details will do so.

M. Thiers. "Are our regiments at the present day the most edifying portion of our population? No, no, they do not deserve to be so spoken of here, but they are admirable schools. Are you aware of what is occurring at the present day, thanks to the energy of our officers and sub-officers? After four or five months every class which is embodied is able to read and write, and its members have all been taught in the regiment. This has been now done for fifteen months. Some of the colonels write to me, 'Out of all the men who have spent four or five months in my regiment there is not one unable to read' (*strong expressions of satisfaction*).

"Further, our officers are paying attention to their own instruction. This is the one thing which occupies them, and I have recently received a letter from one of our colonels, containing these noble words:—

"'It is no longer the fever of advancement that consumes us, it is the fever of rehabilitation.'

"And he means by rehabilitation nothing foolish, but the grand aim of restoring to France the rank which she formerly held, and from which it is now sought to depose her, owing to misfortunes, which will, however, I trust, prove to be but temporary."

What had been for fifteen months done by order

of M. Thiers and General de Cissey was for the future to be carried on under legal sanction, section 41 and section 69 imposing upon commanding officers the duty of instructing their men, and furnishing the men with substantial motives for acquiring instruction. Yet these two clauses are not enough. They do not punish indolence on the part of the men, or negligence on that of their superiors with sufficient severity. They leave too much to be settled by regulations and official letters.

It is perfectly true that it is impossible to provide for everything in an Act of Parliament; but in France we are too much afraid of entering into details; the practice in Germany and England is different, and it leads to good results. If the Minister of War and his officials fall into a dull routine, the bright flame lighted in 1872 must go out. Perseverance is of all virtues the most difficult to practise; it does not go alone, and the law ought to guard against backsliding. Almost all the young soldiers have been labourers in the workshop or the field before joining their regiments; fortunately for themselves, they are accustomed to work ten hours a day, and only to rest on the Sunday. This habit they should not be allowed to lose. If they go tired to their beds every night, they will not want to stay

out. It is idleness which is hard and destructive, not occupation. They will soon come to take a pride in their own progress; and will but like the regiment and regimental life the better if their time is fully occupied by useful work. The superiority of the sailor in war is owing to his hard work on ship-board; the responsibility which falls on each separate man, and the constant presence of danger. The act contains only two educational clauses,—an entire code was required.

A closer connexion between their military instruction and the men's previous education was also required; of the primary school, the school for adults, and the regimental school, should have been made one well-organized whole. Under the Empire one part of the opposition proposed to diminish the term of active military service, by constituting reserves, kept up to the mark by frequent reviews, and by repeated drills during the year. The motive of this party was doubtless to render France invincible at home, while removing from the Government both the means and the temptation of beginning an offensive war. The members of it felt themselves in the hands of adventurers who were at once imprudent and incompetent, and, while they did not foresee the invasion, and the disasters

that accompanied and followed it, they dreaded from hour to hour that France would embark in some ill-fated enterprise: even if the war were to be successful they would have none of it. A peace, a long peace, was their ideal, their passion. They said, and said rightly, that children can learn drill more easily than grown men, and will take more pleasure in it, and if the institution of cadet schools were borrowed from Switzerland and extended, every Frenchman might at twenty have learned without loss of time, and so thoroughly as never to forget them, what is taught him in the regiment between twenty and twenty-five, at the cost of so much sacrifice of money, of hands lost to agriculture and manufactures, and of a very undesirable postponement of marriage. It was objected to them then, as it was objected afterwards in the discussion of 1872, to the advocates of a three years' term, that drill is not everything; that it takes little time to learn; but that on the other hand it requires a long time for a soldier to acquire the supremely necessary habit of respect for discipline, and contempt of danger. The answer was, however ready, that even these may be more thoroughly learnt, and will take a firmer hold if apprenticeship to them begins early. The first Empire had received certain colleges which were monasteries,

or as Monseigneur Dupanloup would have said, minor seminaries, and had made barracks of them. "This is all very good," said M. Thiers, "and very serviceable for public schools (*Lycées*), there the mind takes fire quickly, but in those schools you have only a very small section of the population." (Debate of 8th June.) A legislator, who is not a theorist, can answer easily. What need hinder him, if he throw himself into the matter, from making primary instruction compulsory, and making military drill compulsory in all primary schools? What prevents his imposing on adults from fifteen to twenty one hour's schooling, and one hour's drill on alternate days? In exchange, two out of the five years which are now taken from the most happy and the most vigorous period of life might be given up. Would not this be less oppressive? And would not an uninterrupted and continuous education of this sort, at an age when habits so easily become second nature, be of more value to their military training and to their entire career as citizens? We in France mock at this, for of all people we are the most unwilling to accept innovations (not revolutions). In England all the children learn their drill to the sound of the fife and drum, and the children in the ragged schools can go through their drill like guardsmen.

This Assembly of 1871, though it occupied itself much about education, effected nothing that was decisive and salutary. We give it due credit for sections 41 and 69 in the Recruiting Act, and sections 8 and 9 in the act of the 19th May, 1874, regulating the employment of children in factories, and, for the increase of salaries of persons engaged in primary education. But beyond this what did it do? Its only care was to oppose the University for the advantage of the Clergy. The act establishing the Council of Public Instruction, and that on the Liberty of Superior Instruction have no other character. The first duty of the Assembly was to render primary instruction compulsory. The publications, and one may almost be allowed to say, the sermons, of M. Jules Simon had made the principle of compulsory education popular with the whole Republican party, and the bold and persevering exertions of M. Duruy, when minister, had nearly won over the official world to his views at the end of the Empire. A proposal which M. Jules Simon had brought forward at the beginning of 1870, was being examined by a commission of the Corps Législatif, and had a very good chance of passing into law at the very time when the elections took place. After our troubles these reforms seemed more than ever essential. In the speeches delivered during

the debate on the Army Recruiting Act, every speaker, no matter of what party, repeats these maxims: "Education to be reformed by the army, the army to be reformed by education." The Minister of Public Instruction brought in, on the 15th December, 1871, a carefully prepared and very complete bill. M. Guizot, who, after long opposition and long hesitation, had adhered to the principle of compulsory education, said to him, "The only fault I can find with your bill is that it is too perfect." This speech must not be taken literally. M. Guizot considered that the penalties were too heavy: he thought this severity would be employed as an argument against the principle from which it was derived, and that the success of the bill would be all the more difficult. M. Jules Simon had considered it essential to include all requisite regulations, and provide for every contingency, so that the bill, if once passed, should run no risk of becoming a dead letter. He had not forgotten the educational requirements included in the act of 1841, and so imperfectly carried out. In bringing his bill before the Chamber, he stated that the number of children who could not read and write, far exceeded half a million. "Consequently," said he, "France falls behind Prussia, Scotland, Switzerland, Holland, and the majority of the German States, in the

degree to which the people possess the first elements of education."

Education has long been compulsory in Prussia. It is so in most of the States of Germany, in Switzerland, in Portugal, in Spain, in Denmark, in Norway. It has become compulsory in England, but in a form peculiar to the laws of that country, by the passing of Mr. Forster's Act. Yet the majority of the Assembly received the proposal to make it compulsory in France with a sort of indignation. The Minister was insulted by a member of the Right. The Commission appointed was hostile to the bill. Thirteen members out of fifteen belonged to the party of reaction. These were MM. Dupanloup, de Corcelles, Desbassayns de Delpit, de Richemonte, de Meaux, Gaslonde, Ernoul, de Rességuier, Delpit, Abbé Jaffré, Tailhaud, de Lacombe, Keller, and du Cumont. The Left could only carry MM. Ricard and Carnot. The principle was thus absolutely and irremediably condemned, by the mere choice of the Commission, of which Mgr. Dupanloup was elected chairman and M. Ernoul reporter. It at once began business, and understanding thoroughly the importance of its task, devoted a very considerable number of sittings, not to an examination of the bill, for it was fully understood and thoroughly agreed that it did

not deserve the honour of being discussed, but to the preparation of a new scheme. The report of M. Ernoul was ready at the end of seven months. It was brought in at the sitting of the 3rd July, 1872.

The Government had not proposed absolutely gratuitous education; that was no time to increase our expenditure. Here, by way of parenthesis, it may be observed that when the minister wanted the most trifling increase in the estimates for public instruction, he had to fight a regular battle in the Council. The army of occupation, the daily expenses of which had to be paid, and payments of all kinds for contracts, damages, war contributions, and arrears on the loan, were heavy burdens. M. Ernoul stated the case very clearly, at the outset of his report. "The Minister of Public Instruction, faithful to the principles which he had advocated when in opposition, asked you to follow the example of our conquerors and, renouncing the idea of making education absolutely gratuitous, which he admits would be impossible in the present overburdened state of our finances, he yet calls for severe penalties upon such fathers of families as have not secured the benefit of primary education for their children."

M. Ernoul devoted a great portion of his report

to opposing compulsory education. He maintained that to make education compulsory was to abolish liberty, and even to abolish the family, since the rights of the State were substituted for those of the father in the dearest and most sacred of his functions. Not only did the bill attack the family and liberty, it contemplated nothing short of the suppression of religion, for which would be substituted the civil power, which would take possession of the minds of our children, and thus make itself sole master of the human conscience. Finally M. Ernoul declared himself unable to understand on what ground the family could be compelled to bear the expense of the school. Compulsory gratuitous and secular education form one whole, and it is empty phrase-making to attempt to set up the one without its inevitable concomitants. This argument, which, in additiom to other defects, took no count of the provisions of the bill, was ably presented. All the prejudices of the Right were conciliated by it, and they considered, not without reason, that in opposing compulsory education they were opposing the Republic itself.

M. Jules Simon was not anxious to push forward the discussion of a bill which was no longer his, but that of MM. Ernoul, Dupanloup, de Meaux, de

Cumont, and their colleagues. Any act on primary instruction passed by the Assembly of 1871, could not fail to run counter to those ideas and principles which he had advocated and defended for more than thirty years. He had introduced his bill with the expectation of its remaining an important document among the annals of education, and in the hope that, with time, some modification in the composition of the Assembly would be brought about. On that ill-fated date, the 24th May, the bill, which had been introduced eighteen months before, and the report, which had been brought up more than a year before, had not been publicly discussed. The question, however, had never been entirely dropped, for it was felt on both sides of the house, that it was above all others a vital question.

On all the benches of the majority the rights of the head of a family were made a ground of objection; they were but a shallow pretext, which disguised a far different motive.

The rights of the head of a family are not infringed by doing his children the incalculable benefit of securing them an education.

The greater number of those children whose intelligence has not been cultivated have no family, very many of them no father. The father, when there is one, that father, respect for whose rights

is to occasion the rejection of compulsory education, is one who takes no care of his child, permits him to run wild, or to beg, or who keeps him at work through days of eight or ten hours in length, at a period when such application to work is equally destructive to the body and the mind. This is what lies hidden under the fine-sounding name of the Father of the Family. Ought we, out of respect to fathers such as this, to hesitate longer in following the example of the majority of European States, and enforcing by the sanction of a penalty, that which is recognized as a duty in section 203 of the Civil Code, namely, the training up and instruction of children?

To whom does Society owe a duty? Towards the father who neglects or trades in his child, or towards the child whom the indifference or greed of the father would condemn to physical deterioration and intellectual misery? Towards the child undoubtedly, therefore its education must be made compulsory. If a father abandons his child to chance, or compels him to manual labour throughout the day, without the smallest concern for his mind, is he not wronging others as well as his child? Is he not turning out into society a pariah—an enemy? Is he not sending an incompetent voter to the ballot-box? If so, education must be made compulsory. The State must

interfere in the name of abstract justice, a step due to the interests of the child, of civilization, of our country. It is not a father of a family nor a guardian who stands before it, but a culprit, a bad citizen, a bad father. Society, the basis of which is property, enforces taxation, and enforces military service; shall not education be equally enforced? A citizen has four duties: to instruct himself, which is the first and most essential, to pay, to vote, to fight; school, taxation, the ballot-box, military service in defence of the country. Only those nations among whom these four duties are thoroughly organized, and thoroughly carried out, are free peoples.

This invocation of paternal rights was a mere pretence. The Assembly did not even give a thought to those assumed rights, when in 1874, it passed section 8 and section 25 of the act regulating the employment of children in factories. The act of 1841 had already decreed (sect. 5) that children up to the age of twelve, if working in a factory, should receive elementary instruction. M. Renouard, the reporter, advanced the same reasons in support of this as have just been given in support of compulsory education, but the share of the employer in carrying out obligatory schooling had not then been fixed; there were no penalties; the in-

spection established by clause 10 was a deception. Save in certain industrial centres, such as Mulhausen, where men like Jean Dolfus and Kœchlin were devoting themselves zealously to primary education, the law fell out of use. In the apprenticeship act of 1851, the duty of school instruction was again mentioned; this time there was another misfortune; clause 10 binds employers to leave the children free during certain hours, to admit of their going to school if they are so disposed. The act of 1874 is more precise and much more imperative. "Attendance at school must be certified by means of a certificate drawn up by the teacher, and forwarded each week to the employer." For the first time inspection is regularly organized. Penalties are fixed by section 25. The report of the Commission says in so many words that it is desirable to increase both the powers and the responsibility of the employer in the matter of attendance at school. This act is one of those which most redound to the honour of the Assembly. But in this contradiction between arrangements, prudent and truly liberal, however restrictive in appearance, in the Employment of Children Act, and the dead weight with which for five years the elementary education bill was opposed, is there not something significant? The moment a child enters a work-

shop, it is just, reasonable, and necessary to compel him to learn to read; but if he does not work, if he earns no wages, the freedom of ignorance is protected with pious care, and by a strange misuse of language this is described as respecting paternal rights! And how about orphans, foundlings, forsaken children; are paternal rights respected in their case also? The truth which must be, should be recognized in spite of all pretences, is, that if the Assembly could have passed an act placing all schools in the hands of the religious orders, it would at once have consented to make education compulsory.

M. Jules Simon's bill had revived all the clamour about "Schools of pestilence." Neither the state of our public schools nor the text of the bill, nor the terms of his statement, justified these expressions of alarm. No doctrine, no book, no teacher was insisted upon. "The child shall be taught," said the preamble, "but how and where he is to be taught may be decided at pleasure. Let him only gain knowledge and the object of the law is secured with that of Society and of Nature. The country opens a school in the neighbourhood of a child; if he attends that school he will be received, if not, he will certainly not be constrained to do so. But the country insists upon knowing what his future is to be;

and must be satisfied that the rights of the minor are not overlooked, that his faculties are not allowed to be idle, but that he is prepared for the battle of life and for the duties of a citizen. When, on the one hand conscientious scruples stand in the way of attendance at the public school, and on the other, the family is too poor to pay a teacher, and too ignorant to do without one, the State punishes no one. In such a case it alone is at fault. In this manner a respect for liberty of conscience is reconciled with respect for human intelligence." In spite of these explanations, which certainly were not wanting in liberality, secular instruction, it was constantly asserted, was hidden behind compulsory education, and the proscription of religious education behind that. Catholics, even when they are liberal, cannot abandon the habit of considering their clergy in the light of a public authority intended to maintain a good understanding with the secular power, as its ally and its neighbour, but in no sense to be under its control. Their liberalism consists in not demanding the subordination of the State. The bill gave great prominence to State influence in primary schools, and that was quite sufficient to render it suspect. This hidden conviction of the Catholic party has in an indirect way defeated

compulsory education, to the great damage of our country.

The same spirit of hostility towards secular instruction breaks out in the debate on the bill for a Governing Council of Public Instruction. The bill on this occasion emanated from a parliamentary source. It was signed by the Duc de Broglie, M. Wallon, and a few deputies of the Right. It was at first said that the only question was a return to the act of 15th March, 1850. According to this act of 1850, the Governing Council was almost exclusively constituted of elective members; the decree of 9th March, 1852, had abolished election in favour of the central power; the proposal was to re-establish election. Nothing could, in appearance, be more liberal or more simple; but when the matter came to be looked into, it was seen to be neither liberal nor simple; first, because the act of 1850, though passed with the assistance of M. Thiers, was not sufficiently liberal; and secondly, because instead of simply restoring, the intention was to increase it.

The act of 1850 was described with much severity by M. Barthélemy Saint Hilaire in an admirable little volume, which forms a portion of the annotated collection of laws. This enactment may at the present day be estimated with im-

partiality. It has the double defect that it appoints a Council in which members of the University, and men of capacity, are in a very small minority, to sit as judges upon members of the University accused of professional misconduct, and as umpires in the most intricate questions relative to education; only eight out of the twenty-seven members constituting this Council being University men.

The disadvantages of such an arrangement are to a certain extent counterbalanced by the provision of the act of 1850, that these eight members of the University, nominated for life by the minister, form a Permanent Section to which the preliminaries of business are entrusted, and which can exert a preponderating influence by its origin, its competence, and its permanence.

But all this was altered by the Commission. The members of the Permanent Section, instead of being nominated, as formerly, by the Government, were to be elected every two years by the Council. The aim of this alteration is obvious. Under the system of 1850 the members of the Permanent Section were the allies of the Minister against the Council. In the scheme devised by the Committee, they became allies of the majority against the Minister. The Duc de Broglie, as reporter, carefully and in these

very words, defined the consequences of the one and the other system. Now, the importance of the Permanent Section which, under the system of 1850 had been considerable, would be increased, if instead of being nominated by Government, the members of the section owed their seats to election. Supposing there should be a majority in Council hostile to the University, that majority would place men animated by its own spirit, and imbued with its own prejudices in the Permanent Section, and the University would find itself delivered over to its adversaries.

The Composition of the Governing Council, such as the Commission proposed it should be, led the Duc de Broglie to hope, the Minister and the University to fear, such a result. The Government nominated seven members who were to be men engaged in public instruction. It was free to choose some of them from among the professors of the College of France and the professors of the Museum of Natural History, which do not belong to the University. The four faculties of law, medicine, science, and letters, each elected one member; the College of France also elected one. This gave twelve members belonging, if not to the University strictly so called, at least to public instruction.

The Governing Council, on the plan of the Commission, also included the following:—

Four members elected by the National Assembly by means of voting-papers (*scrutin de liste*) and who might be members of that body.

Two members of the Council of State.

One member of the army, and one of the navy, elected by the national Assembly.

Four archbishops or bishops, elected by their colleagues.

A delegate from the Reformed church, elected by the consistories.

A delegate from the church holding the Augsburg Confession, elected by the consistories.

A member of the central Israelitish consistory, elected by his colleagues.

Two members of the Court of Appeal (*Cour de Cassation*), elected by their colleagues.

Three members of the Institute, elected by a general meeting of the Institute.

A member of the Supreme Council of Arts and Manufactures, elected by his colleagues.

A member of the Supreme Council of Commerce, elected by his colleagues.

A member of the Supreme Council of Agriculture, elected by his colleagues.

Three members of the independent scholastic profession, elected by the Council.

These three members being elected by the majority before proceeding to the election of the Permanent Section, would act as a formidable reinforcement, and would place that election absolutely in its power. Nor was it difficult to foresee to which party the majority itself would belong; for the Council was to include six members chosen by the Assembly, two Councillors of State, four Archbishops, two members of the Court of Appeal, &c. &c.

The Minister, obliged to carry on a contest in an Assembly openly hostile to the spirit of the University, resolved to concentrate his action upon two points only: the election of a certain number of members by the Assembly, and the election of the Permanent Section by the Council. It was a difficult task in the face of so large a majority and with a commission with the Duc de Broglie for its ruling spirit. He was, however, successful. The Assembly renounced with a good grace making the elections which it had reserved for itself, but, on the other hand it was only after a prolonged struggle that the suppression of the Permanent Section was obtained.

At first, in the course of the second debate, the Minister requested the Chamber to retain the Permanent Section, but to leave its nomination with the Government: and after a discussion

in which the Duc de Broglie and M. Jules Simon both spoke, an affirmative vote was given. This upset the whole system of the Commission, and might be regarded as an important victory for the University and the Government.

From that moment the Commission ceased to consider the Permanent Section of the Council of importance. The Minister had never done so. A careful examination of the individuals from among whom his choice would have had to be made had convinced him that he could not form a Permanent Section which would be favourable to compulsory elementary education, to the reform of secondary education, and to conferring degrees by the faculties of the State. He therefore resorted to the expedient of proposing, as a substitute for the Permanent Section, a Committee of Advice, which might act as the private council of the Minister, and the disciplinary council of the scholastic body. The act was finally passed with these provisions. The creation of this new Committee of Advice, which was carried into effect by a decree dated 25th March, 1873, remedied some defects of the act. It has already proved of great service; and no doubt it will prove even more useful in the course of time.

Notwithstanding the appointment of the Committee of Advice, there are some members of the University who still regret the Permanent Section. Their view, and it is a correct one, is that the members of a Permanent Section would have had more authority to resist a Minister. It is true that to the strength lent by the security of their position, and their personal distinction,—for clearly they could only be selected from the élite of the scholastic body,—would be added that derived from their union with some of the greatest persons in the State in a body invested with a directing and controlling superintendence over most of the acts of the administration. But this authority, which the University had already experienced, and which went so far as to annihilate that of the Minister, is precisely that which determined the Government in 1873 to prefer the Committee of Advice to the Permanent Section. It is neither a wise, nor truly liberal policy, thus to put the Minister under the authority of an oligarchical council, which becomes the irresponsible master of all the patronage and privileges of the University; the Committee of Advice, which is necessarily consulted, but not necessarily obeyed, is more likely to reconcile respect for established rights with the possibility of reforms, and the tutelary principle of ministerial

responsibility. The Governing Council, such as it now is, acts as a sufficient curb on the rashness of a Minister who might look askance at Latin verse, the Delectus, and Literal Translation, and it was well not to go the whole length of abolishing the apparent and responsible head of the educational department, by imposing upon him councillors whose independence would be absolute, and who, among other interests of which they would be the trustees, would naturally guard the interests of routine with pious care.

Of the act as it emerged from the debate it may be said that, without being good, it is very nearly harmless. It is the best that could be expected from such a Chamber, constituting, as it does, an undeniable advance on the legal decree of 1852, the first article of which runs as follows:— "The President of the Republic, at the suggestion of the Minister, appoints and revokes the members of the Governing Council." The report of the Committee, if adopted without amendment, would certainly not have proved nearly so inoffensive as the act. When it was published, and during the debate, it was accused of being "clerical." This was not the case, or at least not directly, not openly so; it was levelled against the University: that was its distinct feature. Those who drew it up might conscientiously believe that they were safe-

guarding the rights of liberty, of conscience, and of science; of liberty, for thirty-two out of the thirty-nine members are chosen by election; of conscience, for in the Council there are four bishops and three representatives of dissenting religions; of science, for all the members who are called to form part of it, belong to the foremost ranks of the most liberal professions.

It is evident that for the discussion of the various courses of study to be pursued, it is advisable that the Council should contain representatives of the different creeds, of the army, the navy, the law, of commerce and manufactures. But to call them in such numbers as to put the professional members of the Council in a minority, was a blunder. Nor was it wise to confer upon a Council so constituted, judicial attributes which would subject a numerous body of functionaries to the judgment and decision not only of mere strangers, but of competitors and actual enemies.

Besides the suppression of the Permanent Section and of the four members appointed by the Assembly, the bill during the debate underwent some interesting modifications. The appointment of the member for the army and the member for the navy was taken from the Assembly, and given to competent ministers, upon consultation with

the Superior Military Council for the former, and with the Admiralty for the latter. The Councillors of the Court of Appeal were reduced to two, without any very appreciable motive. On the other hand, the number of the members of the Institute was increased from three to five.

The law enacts that "Five members of the Institute are elected by the General Assembly, and chosen from each of the five classes." This is a sensible improvement. The number of competent men is increased. For besides being taken from each class, they are chosen for their merit; had they been elected without academic distinction, it would have been for their opinions.

To the five members of the Institute was added a member of the Academy of Medicine, a very good addition to an educational council. The number of members of free instruction was increased to four. All councillors are appointed or elected for a term of six years, and are indefinitely re-eligible.

During the debate an incident occurred which deserves notice. When M. Jules Simon asked the Assembly to forego the right attributed to it by the Commission, of itself nominating by voting-papers several members of the Governing Council, he did so on the ground that it was important not to introduce politics into questions of education.

The Commission consented to the suppression of this right from a wholly opposite motive.

"The Council," said M. de Broglie, "will count among its members three Councillors of State, who having been appointed Councillors of State by the Assembly, will represent its tendencies in the Governing Council."

Words truly curious and instructive! They are no longer, however, in accordance with facts, since the Councillors of State are now appointed by the Government; but they were true enough then, at a time when M. de Broglie considered the Councillors of State as the direct representatives of the tendency of the Assembly; it was this tendency which he laboured to introduce into the Council. In addition to three Councillors of State, the majority of the Assembly could still reckon upon the members for free instruction, the magistrates, and the bishops, which, with the share of influence, though restricted, that they would have on the elections for the Institute and the different councils, would give the Assembly paramount power. The principal point was to have reduced the members representing the University to twelve out of thirty-nine, as in 1850 they had been reduced to eight out of twenty-seven. These hopes on the part of the Duc de Broglie have not been confirmed by experience, and it must be admitted, to

the praise of the Governing Council, that its attention is devoted infinitely more to education than to politics.

Certainly the Duc de Broglie was by far the most important and most influential member of the majority in the Assembly; nevertheless in all matters touching worship and education it was Monseigneur Dupanloup who had the lion's share of direction and influence. He it was who presided over the committee on elementary instruction, and presided over it for four years. Now Monseigneur Dupanloup's educational views have long been matters of notoriety. He has written much and spoken much on this subject, and always brilliantly, always in the same sense, and always with perfect frankness. We hasten to render him this justice. In order to appreciate, not what he accomplished, for we have just seen that his success was very imperfect, but what he wished to accomplish, and what under his guidance and example the majority of the members of the Assembly wanted to do, we must quote some of the programmes which he has sown broadcast by speech and by pamphlet. The oldest will be the best. Here is one which is dated November 13th, 1849. It is an article by him published in the *Ami de la Réligion*, from whence it was quoted by M. Barthélemy de Saint Hilaire. The bishop is

speaking of the Falloux law, which has just been elaborated in an extra parliamentary committee, and which, amended and perfected, but very imperfectly so in the liberal sense, became that famous law of March 15, 1850. Here are his words, which, like everything coming from his pen, deserve to be well considered:—

"Contrary to all common sense, it has been vainly said and repeated, that M. de Falloux's law was drawn up in accordance with the University, and in its favour. It is against the University monopoly, and in spite of the University, that this law was framed. Every one of the reforms contemplated by this bill, which before many years would completely change the face of France, have been laboriously conquered. It is only after months of hard fighting, constantly renewed, that the following results have been successively obtained and carried by main force:—

"The enfranchisement of the small seminaries;

"The admission of specified religious bodies not recognized by the State, and of Jesuits expressly named;

"The abolition of grades;

"The suppression of the normal schools;

"The radical reform of primary instruction;

"The profound and irreparable dislocation of the hierarchy of the University;

"The liberty of elementary private schools and charitable instruction;

"Finally, the large place reserved for my Lords the Bishops in the Councils of Public Instruction."

The Assembly of 1871, besides the laws which we have rapidly sketched, enacted several others, for it was not idle. We have quoted the most important, those which best define the spirit of the Assembly. We will now proceed to classify all the laws which had reference to the liberation of the territory, that is to say, the treaties with Germany, the loans and taxes.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIBERATION OF THE TERRITORY.

DURING the months of April and May, it required a certain amount of strength of mind for the Assembly seriously to discuss laws or organization, being placed as it then was between the formidable insurrection in Paris and the outposts of the Prussian army of occupation. The civil war only lasted two months. The occupation might continue for some time, as it was dependent on the payment of the five milliards.

It was stipulated in article 3 of the convention of February 26th 1871, that immediately after the ratification of the said convention, the German troops should evacuate the interior of Paris, and the forts on the left bank of the Seine.

That within the shortest possible delay, to be fixed by an agreement between the military authorities of the two countries, they should completely evacuate the departments of Calvados, Orne, Sarthe, Eure-et-Loire, Yonne, also the departments of the

Seine-Inférieure, Eure, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, Aube, and the Côte d'Or up to the left bank of the Seine. That after the final ratification of the treaty of peace, and the payment of the first half-milliard, they should evacuate the Somme, Oise, and those parts of the departments of Seine-Inférieure, Seine, Seine-et-Oise, and Seine-et-Marne situated on the right bank of the Seine; also the forts round Paris on the right bank.

That, finally, after the payment of the two milliards, the German occupation should only comprise the departments of Marne, Ardennes, Haute Marne, Meuse, Vosges, Meurthe, as well as the fortress of Belfort with its territory, these departments, fortress, and territory being the guarantee for the payment of the remaining three milliards.

In the final treaty of peace signed at Frankfort May 10th, 1871, some points in these dispositions were slightly modified. First come some territorial rectifications with regard to the boundaries of Belfort and the frontiers on the east, then, in article 7 occurred the following stipulation, of which the importance and the origin are only too palpable:—

"The evacuation of the departments of Oise, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, and Seine, as well as of the Paris forts, will take place as soon as the German Government considers that order has been sufficiently re-established, in France as well

as in Paris, to ensure the carrying out of the engagements entered into by France. In any case this evacuation will take place on the payment of the third half-milliard."

Thus the departments of Oise, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, and Seine, which according to the agreement of February 26th formed part of those departments which were to be evacuated after the payment of the first milliard, were to be occupied until the payment of the third half-milliard, unless Germany, in her wisdom and clemency, should consider us sufficiently cured and re-established to hasten the term of our deliverance.

On May 10th, the date of the signature of the final treaty, Paris was still in the hands of the Commune. Even after her victory many persons continued to think that France could not raise a loan of five milliards. It must be borne in mind that we had enormous arrears to pay, partly for levies and equipments, and also for repairs to bridges, railways, roads, public buildings, monuments, colleges, hospitals, barracks, and fortresses. The enemy had drawn war contributions from all sides, which had involved departments, communes, and families in debt; it had collected the taxes for its own benefit, and continued to collect them after the preliminaries of peace up to the convention of March 16th 1871. Half of France was

uncultivated, almost all the factories were destroyed; death or disease had decimated the population of our workshops. The expenses for feeding and lodging the army of occupation, both men and horses, fell upon us. The most moderate estimated the sum necessary to put all things in order at three milliards over and above the ransom, and this was exclusive of private losses, interruptions in work, and the difficulties which would arise on all sides from want of capital and credit. Our moral condition was not less deplorable. Should we find the old energy to set to work again? Could we inspire each other, could we inspire foreigners with that confidence without which there can be no commercial transactions or industrial activity? Should we have a government? Should we at least have a police? Might not the insurrection that had just been suppressed break out again? Could we hope for peace at home after having made more than thirty thousand prisoners from amongst ourselves? In the midst of the dreadful misfortunes into which we had fallen, instead of solely occupying ourselves with the re-establishment of the country, we only thought of seeking office, reviving hatreds, and quarrelling among ourselves for power! Such was our position at the time when we brought out one of the largest loans that a nation has ever

contracted. The Germans had allowed it to be stated in the fifth paragraph of article 3 of the convention containing the preliminaries of peace, that after the payment of two milliards, the Emperor would be disposed to substitute a financial guarantee for the territorial guarantee consisting of a partial occupation of French territory, "if it were offered by the French Government with conditions which His Majesty the Emperor and King could recognize as sufficient for the interests of Germany." But those who were discouraged and weak said we should neither get the loan nor the guarantee for the loan. Others did not wish to pay. Let us pay the first two milliards, they said, as we must, and we can manage it. As to the three remaining, we will pay them with the mitrailleuse.

But the Government wished to pay and to retrieve. The Assembly also would not be discouraged. The Government even wanted to pay in advance and managed to do it by miracles of patriotism and wisdom. In order to realize how necessary it was to hasten the evacuation, we must remember how it weighed upon the occupied provinces and even the whole of France. And as the measure of the benefits conferred by the liberation, we will recapitulate the chief misfortunes, first of the invasion, and then of the occupation, which

are historical. We will not do this in a spirit of malice, nor to put forward unseasonable claims. We ourselves have been most barbarous invaders. But though the first to recall the conflagrations in the Palatinate and the cruelties of the great Napoleon, we must insist upon the obvious fact that progress would be impossible, and the iron age permanent, if reprisals were legitimate after 200 or even after fifty years.

First, as to the invasion. From the moment that the Prussians entered French ground, there was a marked difference in the treatment of our provinces. In Alsace and Lorraine they settled down as if they were at home, in the other provinces they only encamped. Those who go on saying that at first they only thought of taking Alsace, and that later on they claimed Lorraine, to punish us for not having surrendered at discretion after our first disasters, and for having fought until a continuance of the struggle had become impossible, have either not read the German newspapers, or care only to feed their resentment at the expense of truth and of their country. You have but to open the *Nouvelliste Versaillais*, a paper founded by the Prussian Prefect Brauchitsch, and which afterwards became the *Moniteur Officiel* of the Versailles Government, to see that a claim was made, not only to Alsace, but to Alsace and Lorraine. This paper even

goes so far as to speak of Champagne. It is true it speaks as if jestingly. It declares that M. Thiers had conceived a project, "worthy of his great age," which consisted of immediately establishing peace by uniting France and Belgium under the Government of King Leopold, "who would sign with both hands the cession of Alsace, Lorraine, and even of Champagne." The Prussians have never concealed their hopes, or rather their intentions; the traces of them are to be seen in all their acts. They incorporated Alsace and that part of Lorraine which they intended to retain from the very first day that they set foot in them. We must not look in Alsace-Lorraine for the history of the invasion, we shall only find Prussia; but at Rheims, which became the chief town of the government of the north of France, and at Versailles, where the King, as Generalissimo, established his headquarters.

When the Prussians took possession of a department their first care was to appoint a prefect, who in his turn appointed sub-prefects. Under them, there was a lieutenant or captain of police, with them a general commanding officer, a governor, and a number of adjutants. A general district was formed of several departments, at the head of which was a general of high rank, assisted by a civil commissioner. Thus the depart-

ment of Seine-et-Oise, whose prefect was M. de Brauchitsch, was under the governor for the north of France, whose headquarters were at Rheims.

Later on Versailles in its turn became the headquarters of a district which comprised, besides Seine-et-Oise, the departments of Oise, Somme, Seine-Inférieure, Eure-et-Loir, and Loiret, and which towards the end received large additions. The governor, civil commissioner, intendant, the prefects and sub-prefects formed what might be called regular government. The inhabitants also owed obedience to the marshal, generals, and intendants of all ranks. They did not want for masters. These masters were not always agreed amongst themselves. If their numbers crushed the vanquished, requisitioned their labour, and taxed them at discretion, on the other hand their quarrels were a benefit to them, for, sometimes, in that strangely mixed society the side of the oppressed was taken, certainly not from love for him, but from professional jealousy of the oppressor.

One administrative organization which the Prussians did not suppress, but on the contrary specially upheld, was the municipal authority; mayor, assistants, and municipal councillors. The mayor was indispensable to them for two

reasons, to squeeze money out of the people and if necessary to calm them. When a municipal officer, harassed, coerced, and scoffed at, threatened to resign, his threat had almost always a good result. How should the German prefects, knowing neither our laws, nor our regulations our customs, nor our character, be able to maintain order and collect the taxes, without the help of this magistrate, elected, listened to, respected, both head and protector of the population? Therefore they kept the mayor, but while keeping him they treated him ill in every way; they held him responsible for everything; for a tax which had not been paid, for a requisition which had not been executed, for a misdemeanour committed by a child, a vagabond, or a foreigner. They fined him, put him in prison, transported him to Germany, threatened to shoot him. They demanded services from him contrary to all rules of honour, as we understand it in France: for instance, they attempted to make a spy of him. They charged him with the duty of levying the taxes, holding him personally responsible for their collection. They authorized him to contract debts in the name of the commune. All the requisitions which they made upon him bore the injunction that they were to be executed at once. Refusal to obey or delay in obeying were severely,

and in some cases cruelly, punished. They gave an authority which is not conferred on them by any French law to the mayors of cantons over the mayors of villages, and to the mayors of the principal towns over those of the cantons, and this, for the sole reason that they had them on the spot, in their power, and could constrain them either by menaces or very effectual severity.

We said just now that the very day that the Germans entered the chief town of a department, they hastened to nominate a prefect; the prefect on his side lost no time in sending his orders to the mayors, in invoking, when he could, the French laws, and in adopting the tone and manners of a French prefect, just as if there had only been in all that a change of person. M. de Brauchitsch succeeded M. Edward Charton. M. Charton was par excellence a Frenchman, a liberal, a republican; M. de Brauchitsch is a German pro-consul. That does not matter. M. de Brauchitsch, the Prussian prefect at Versailles, affects to be astonished at not meeting with the same deference and eagerness to serve him as "the other prefect." He takes great care to use the paper left by his imperial predecessor M. Cornuau for all his correspondence, so that his letters invariably have the stamp "Le Conseiller d'État, Préfet de Seine-et-Oise."

M. de Brauchitsch hastened, as did all his colleagues, to issue an order for the collection of revenue. This order, which was completed and perfected a few days after, is dated October 10th. In the absence of the superior officials of the French financial administration, M. de Brauchitsch invested the mayors with the office of collectors. The mayors of each commune were to pay, on the 10th of each month, to the mayor of the chief town of the canton the twelfths due, and on the 15th the mayors of the chief towns of the cantons should repay the sums collected "at the chief exchequer of the department, established at the prefecture, to the Secretary M. Schmidt." They could not, under pain of a fine, retard the payment of the quota of each commune, nor diminish it for deficiences or absentees, etc. Those who were present paid for those who were absent, "the communes," said the decree, "being responsible for the collection of all their revenue."

This decree of M. de Brauchitsch contains a consideration which is worthy of remark. It is not for the wants of the German army, nor in the interest of the Germans that the revenue is collected; M. de Brauchitsch takes all this trouble for the good of the French population only: "Considering," he says, "that the necessary re-establishment of legal order and of the adminis-

trations in those parts of France which are occupied by the German troops require a supply of cash which should be furnished without delay."

Some communes were almost deserted. The able-bodied men were with the army; those families who had the means fled before the invasion. M. de Brauchitsch ordered the mayors not to confine themselves too scrupulously to the official assessment. "The assessment of the direct taxes shall be left completely in the hands of the mayors and municipal councillors." So long as the exact total be paid on the day named, the prefect need not trouble himself as to which purses shall furnish it. "They (the mayors and municipal councillors) shall particularly enforce the tax on those persons who by absence have evaded the calamities of war, instead of remaining to fulfil their duties to their communes. It was easy to see that the communes would have some difficulty in paying, especially in paying for the absentees; the prefect obviated this difficulty by his decree dated October 28th, 1870:—

"The mayors, with the consent of the municipal council of each commune, are authorized to contract loans on the security of the revenues of their commune: this credit will always be sufficient to insure the regular payment of the direct

taxes for each month." And he adds: "Besides the property of the respective communes, all the landed, personal, and real property of the absent taxpayer shall be given as guarantee for the payment of the debts which the commune shall have contracted for the payment of the said contributions." Most of these absentees whom they wished to punish so cruelly were in the ranks, fighting for their country!

M. de Brauchitsch foresees that there may be recalcitrant members among the taxpayers who are not absent: but he does not trouble himself about so small a matter. "The mayors shall be directed to give me the names of any persons refusing to pay their share of the twelfth, in order that I may see about it;" that is to say, in order that I may put them in prison. In M. de Brauchitsch's eyes this rôle of informer had not an odious character; it forms part of the Prussian system of administration, as is proved by a notice from the director of Police, M. de Stœphasius in the following words, which was copied from the walls of Metz:—

"300 francs reward.

"During the night of the 14th to the 15th of last October the monument of the 18th Royal Prussian division, near Vernéville, was defiled and damaged in the most disgraceful manner. The

above reward will be paid to any one giving such information of the author or authors of this act as shall lead to their arrest." The last article of M. de Brauchitsch's supplementary decree, on the payment of the direct taxes, provides for the case of taxpayers who have paid in advance for the year 1870. "These taxpayers," says article 7, "shall nevertheless pay the twelfth for the month of October, and even for the following months, leaving it to them to reclaim it later from the French Government, when the payment for the year 1871 is due."

M. de Brauchitsch's different decrees for collecting revenue were issued in accordance with an order from the Governor-General, and we shall find pretty nearly the same regulations in all the departments.

It was impossible to collect the indirect taxes in the usual way. Moreover, the population being dispersed, business of all kinds at a standstill, and fraud facilitated by the mere presence of hostile armies, it would only have yielded an insignificant return. They therefore hit upon the expedient of representing it by an increase of the direct taxation. The estimate of the sums destined to supply the place of the indirect taxes appears to have been left to the discretion of the prefects. Most of them doubled the amount of

the direct taxes. M. de Brauchitsch levied a sum equal to one and a half of this tax. Others preferred a poll-tax, on the pretext that an indirect tax is a tax on the consumer; but they varied in their application of it, some rating it at twenty-five francs, others at fifty francs. The municipal council at Rheims, in a plain-spoken resolution, of which the text is given below, exposed the true character of this tax, which was only a war contribution in disguise:—

"Meeting held November 3rd, 1870.

"The mayor (M. Dauphinot), made the following statement:—

"The Germans, not knowing the principles on which the taxpayers are assessed, have demanded that the amount representing the tax, which they value at 3,254,880 francs, for the city of Rheims and the rural communes which form part of its cantons, be paid to them in twelfths, monthly, say 271,240 francs for the month of September, and as much for each of the following months. This sum of 3,254,880 francs is fixed upon by the Germans taking as a basis:—1st, the direct taxes representing about 1,500,000 francs; 2nd, the indirect taxes for the surplus. These sums must be paid by the mayor of the town, who must raise it from all the inhabitants, in proportion

to their position, their profession, and their trade.

"The Council,—

"Considering on the one hand, the total taxation cannot be other than the sum total of all the contributions required of individuals by the Government to secure the public services;

"These services at Rheims are at present, and have been for the last two months suspended.

"On the other hand, taxation is only the payment by a citizen of one part of his revenue, in order that he may be guaranteed the peaceful enjoyment of the remainder;

"In the present state of affairs, all sources of revenue are exhausted;

"Therefore the levy ordered by the German authorities is absolutely contrary to the principles of taxation;

"It is true that they invoke the right of war;

"But that this right, however strong, and however elastic they may make it, cannot be stretched to the point of legalizing the collection, by an invading power, of the sum of the public revenue from a disarmed population, with whom all resistance is out of the question, and whose resources have already been drained by requisitions during the occupation;

"Considering that the levy demanded, besides being iniquitous, is practically impossible;

"That, as a fact, if the direct taxes are determined beforehand by the fiscal law, such is not, and cannot be the case with the indirect taxes; that some of these latter, such as the duty on registration and changes of domicile, only co-exist with the facts which open a way to them, and the acts themselves of the taxpayer who pays them are subject to constant fluctuation, and liable even to collapse entirely when the normal life of a country is interrupted, as at the present time; that this applies equally to those taxes which are levied upon the consumers;

"That it is evident that the indirect taxes are beyond the reach of any ordinary assessment;

"Therefore, that it is neither fair, nor rational to take as a basis for the taxes now claimed, the budgetary estimates of other years, estimates which are, and can only be, cruelly contradicted by recent events.

"Besides, in the first place, a distinction must be made in the amount produced by direct taxation between that which goes to the State, and that which belongs either to the department, or the communes;

"That the German authorities representing themselves as in the place of the French State,

can therefore only lay claim to that part which the State itself would have received, taking into account the different eventualities which have lessened its amount.

"On the other hand the municipal administration is in possession of none of the necessary elements for the establishment of lists of taxes; that the special registers drawn up for this purpose are the property of the State, and remain in the keeping of those functionaries who have charge of them; that the reconstruction of these lists, on absolutely incomplete and hypothetical bases, would necessitate a very long, complicated, and arbitrary statement.

"Besides, without doubt there are a considerable number of taxpayers who have paid in advance the total of the taxes for which they are liable for the whole year;

"And among those who have not thus paid in advance, there are many who from the suspension of their business and the daily absorption of their savings, are wholly unable to make any payment;

"The cessation of all work and the misery which it entails have assumed such proportions in our town, that about 15,000 persons are at this moment chargeable on the relief fund (*Bureau de bienfaisance*);

"In such a state of things the collection of the taxes is impracticable, it would be so even for the French Government if its authority were re-established;

"Lastly, whereas the duty of collecting the taxes which the German authorities wish to impose upon the mayor, with a commission, is incompatible with the character and rules of his functions:

"These functions being essentially gratuitous, and the French law, which is still in existence and governs us, notwithstanding the occupation, defining and limiting its attributes; the duty of collecting the taxes forms no part of them;

"That it is impossible for him to usurp the rights and duties conferred on special officials; and besides, the means of carrying it into execution would be wholly wanting;

"Therefore the Council is unanimously of opinion that the mayor cannnot comply with the above injunction."

Certainly it is impossible to speak more courageously, or to be more evidently right. The conqueror could answer to these arguments absolutely nothing; but then he was the conqueror, and he had recourse to force.

But a war contribution was in question; he need not have had recourse to this pretence of collecting

the French revenue, a cruel hypocrisy, which if construed literally, would have led to a most iniquitous division of the burden. The Germans should have said, without subterfuge, that this was an extortion. Everything was changed by that, it became only a question of how far the conqueror intended to push the punishment, and how much the victim could bear.

At Rheims, a commercial and manufacturing town, all sources of income were exhausted; 15,000 poor applied for relief at the *Bureau de bienfaisance.*

In all the towns the municipal funds not having had any receipts from the customs (*octroi*), were exhausted. The Prussian prefects said, "Borrow." But neither the mayor nor the municipal councils have a right to contract a loan without a law to that effect. Who would have taken part in a loan, contracted illegally, on the authorization of a Prussian prefect, of whom all trace would be gone when the time came for repayment? Besides, were the communes in a likely position to find people who would lend them money. The communal resources, and private resources, had been exhausted by requisitions, devastations, and the suspension of labour.

This idea of a communal loan was dear to the heart of the Prussian Government; firstly, it fur-

nished the means for paying them immediately; and secondly, they intended to do or to cause to be done a good turn to their countrymen by making them the creditors of the French communes whose lands and incomes would thus have been mortgaged for a long time to Prussians. They insinuated to the mayors, that these being the only creditors who could enforce repayment after the war, it was with them that they must treat. No one was more eager than M. de Brauchitsch for this arrangement.

In Prussia a syndicate of bankers had been formed, whose representative, M. Holtz, was at Versailles ready to take in pawn either the communal property or that of private individuals who were absent. German bankers and pawnbrokers followed on the heels of the German armies, the former with full sacks which they only wanted to empty, the latter with empty sacks which they only wanted to fill. Count Bismarck had, as we have already seen, offered M. Thiers the aid of great bankers for the payment of the ransom, and M. de Brauchitsch had lesser ones ready to supply the wants of the communes. M. Holtz, according to M. de Brauchitsch, had only come to Versailles with the benevolent intention of helping the French communes. They had better make haste, for money was still cheap; the

operation would become more difficult if it were delayed, because on the one hand the wants of the communes would be more pressing, and on the other hand their securities would be depreciated in value, owing to the daily ravages of war. M. de Brauchitsch, who well knew the famous theory of the psychological moment, strongly advised his patients *in extremis* to get out of their difficulties by mortgaging the property of the absentees to M. Holtz and his syndicate. He himself was in no way concerned in all this. He was actuated solely by motives of sympathy for the conquered.

In this same spirit, later, when M. de Brauchitsch insisted on the opening of a large shop for supplying the army at Versailles, and that M. Rameau pointed out the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of such an enterprise, the following letter was written to the mayor of Versailles:—

"I desire that you will collect between the 1st December and the 5th, at the latest, in a shop convenient for that purpose, a sufficient quantity of victuals and commodities of all sorts to provision the town of Versailles for one month.

"I hold you and the municipal council responsible for the severe measures which will be had recourse to in the case of a refusal, or the continuance on your part or under your influence

of a passive resistance by the tradespeople of the town. After the above-named date I shall levy a fine of 50,000 francs from the town of Versailles, which shall be immediately put into execution by military force.

"If you think it advisable you may treat of this matter with M. Baron (at M. Biberon's, 45, Rue de la Paroisse), who at my request is willing to undertake the provisioning of the town, as you may see by the enclosed report."

M. Baron was a German, resident in France. The "enclosed report" contained a tariff in which the prices were "rather high" even in M. Baron's eyes. "Some of these prices, it is true, are very high, and most unusual in France," said M. Baron; "but the extraordinary state of affairs justifies extraordinary prices. In consideration of these circumstances, you will not be so much astonished as at the first glance at my prices." Here are, according to M. Délerot (*Versailles pendant l'Occupation*), some examples of these prices:—Chocolate, ten francs the kilo.; alcohol, 400 francs the hectolitre; sugar, six francs the kilo.; etc.—

Those measures to which M. de Brauchitsch would have recourse if his counsels were not attended to, and if Messrs. Holtz and Baron's good intentions were not recognized, are enu-

merated in article 3 of a published decree, dated January 30th, 1871, on the same day that the agreement for the armistice, which had been signed with the greatest secrecy two days before, was made known in Versailles. The principal object of this decree was to make the list of taxes voted for 1870 executory in 1871. "Those communes which are in arrears," says article 3, "will have to pay a fine of 50 francs for each day of delay over and above the sum due by the commune. If the payment is delayed beyond one week, troops shall be quartered in those communes, who will be obliged to feed and lodge them without any indemnity, and to pay besides six francs daily to each officer, and two francs to each soldier, until the amount due has been entirely paid off. The officer in command of the troops will be authorized to use bodily constraint to recalcitrant representatives of the commune and taxpayers, and to employ all legal means which he may consider necessary to enforce the payment of the sums due."

Besides the taxes, the Prussians had in reserve war contributions and fines, as two other means of getting cash. Fines were a ready means which any functionary had the right to use, whether he were general, prefect, civil commissioner, or only a police officer. M. de

Brauchitsch, in one of the letters which we have just read, threatened the town of Versailles with a fine of 50,000 francs; there were also smaller fines for lesser offences. "If this requisition is not attended to within twenty-four hours, I shall fine you personally 200 francs." Sometimes fines were used less as a means of extorting money, than as a means of inflicting punishment:— "In consequence of the letter which you have written me, I inflict on you personally a fine of 2000 francs." The war contributions were naturally made on the largest scale. We may judge of them from one quotation alone. On February 18th, 1871, the mayor of Versailles, M. Rameau, received the following letter:—

"Mr. Mayor,—

"In virtue of an order from the Governor-General for the north of France, each of the departments within his jurisdiction must pay a war contribution in proportion to its pecuniary resources. For the department of Seine-et-Oise this contribution is fixed at the sum of 10,000,000 francs. According to the division of the said war contribution among the cantons of the department, the canton of Versailles (north, south, and west) must pay the sum of 1,540,567 francs.

"I must add that this contribution is to be paid immediately, in one sum, and is independent

of the ordinary direct and indirect contributions to the general exchequer of the department.

"I must also warn you, that any claim for a diminution of your allotment will not delay the military execution of the immediate payment."

Versailles was not worse off than the other towns. In making known its condition, we are only giving an idea of that of the other towns of France which were occupied by the enemy.

M. Rameau summed it up thus on January 30th, 1871:—

	Francs.
"The town paid each month for direct taxes	71,146
For indirect taxes	106,669
For the food of from 7 to 800 officers, paid by subscription at the rate of six francs a head per diem for one month	150,000
For the supply of bread to the general store for the army of occupation	110,000
For requisitions in kind, about .	44,000
For help to the refugees	15,000
Say, total per month . .	496,815"

Or in round figures six millions a year.

Now the annual receipts of the budget of the town amounted to about 800,000 francs in

ordinary times, and an equal sum was required for the expenses. Since the occupation these expenses had increased in proportions which surpassed over and over again the whole of the revenue. It was on a town thus exhausted that on the 18th of February a war-contribution of 1,054,567 francs was imposed. And M. de Nostitz-Wallwitz, the civil commissioner of the government of the North of France, contented himself with replying to the mayor's remonstrances :—

"As in their official acts and many speeches the members of the Government of the National Defence have declared the resources of France to be inexhaustible, I cannot doubt that the town of Versailles and the department of Seine-et-Oise will easily find the means to meet the pecuniary expenses imposed by the situation."

The only concession that M. Rameau could obtain, on proving his utter inability, was time. He was allowed to pay in instalments. The town never paid any but the first instalment, which was 100,000 francs. If peace had not been concluded, Versailles, whose resources were completely exhausted, would have been obliged to submit to the military execution.

In connexion with the situation of Versailles, we will give a table of the losses incurred by the town of Rheims.

The department of Marne was occupied for several months after the conclusion of peace. Let us point out at once two important differences between the two towns. The prefect of Seine-et-Oise had insisted on the repayment of the twelfths which had already been paid to the French Government, "leaving it to the taxpayers to get redress from the French Government after the peace." In the department of Marne they were not so hardly dealt with; the prefect raised the same claim, but did not execute it, and demanded nothing from those who had paid already and who showed the tax-gatherer's receipt. Another difference: M. de Brauchitsch estimated the amount yielded by the indirect taxes at 150% of the direct taxes; in the Marne, these two taxes were regarded as equal, and the Prussians contented themselves with doubling the direct tax.

The Prussian authorities had fixed the total amount of direct and indirect taxes for the town of Rheims at 271,240 francs per month for the year 1870. (At this date the direct taxes yielded about 1,600,000 francs. Adding to this an equal amount to represent the indirect taxes we arrive at 3,200,000 francs, say, slightly forcing the figures, to this sum of 271,240 francs per month.) From the commencement of 1871 the monthly contributions were increased to 447,546 francs.

	Francs.
The town therefore paid for the last four months of the year the sum of	1,084,960
And for the two first months of 1871	895,092
Total of direct and indirect taxes	1,980,052

At the time when the department of Seine-et-Oise was condemned to pay 10,000,000, a large war-contribution was also demanded from the department of Marne. The town of Versailles, taxed as we have already seen at 1,054,567 francs, had already paid 10,000 francs, when events occurred which obliged the conquerors to discontinue this enormous exaction. The town of Rheims was slower in paying, and the result was that it never made any payment of the kind. In revenge another war-contribution was imposed, intended to furnish an indemnity for those Germans domiciled in France, who had been expelled at the commencement of hostilities. The amount of this war-contribution, or fine, which fell to the share of the town of Rheims, was 151,761 francs. The town paid 72,126 francs. The remainder was not insisted upon, the old German residents of the town of Rheims having themselves declared, that they had always been well treated by the

population, that they had not been expelled, that they had suffered no losses, and that they only asked to be allowed to return afterwards to their places of business.

The town had only to pay two fines: one of 10,000 francs for an attack on a patrol in the suburbs; the other of 300 francs for bills placarded during the night.

The requisition in money amounted to the following sums:—

	Francs.
For firewood	1,689 65
For the army before Paris . .	150,000 00
Furnishing woollen socks . .	2,778 82
Blankets	4,631 10
Total of the requisitions in money	159,099 57
The requisitions in kind amounted to	1,440,653 58
Direct and indirect taxes amounted to	1,980,052 00
Extraordinary contributions .	72,126 51
Fines, twice	10,300 00
The total for the town of Rheims during the occupation amounting to	3,662,231 66

The position of the town of Rheims in normal times was better than that of Versailles, whose

receipts and expenditure were balanced by a sum of 800,000 francs. The ordinary receipts of Rheims in 1870 amounted to 1,310,210 frs. 04 c.; in 1871 to 1,435,708 frs. 85 c. The ordinary expenses in 1870 were only 990,283 frs. 85 c. In 1871 they went down to 847,974 frs. 48 c.

Nevertheless, the town was soon involved, and obliged to resort to loans. The number of families who were thrown out of work by the closing of the factories, and had to come upon it for relief, was enormous. A subscription raised amongst the inhabitants to help the most needy amounted to 90,000 francs a month. If the war had continued, the town would have been unable to fulfil the requisitions, or supply the wants of its poor. It was the same everywhere.

The estimated amount of requisitions in kind can only be approximate. The municipalities kept an account of articles for which they paid for the enemy's use, to which must be added many things which the municipal councillors had to beg from private individuals when the shops in the town could not provide them, those things which the German officers and soldiers seized in their houses or in the highways; the provisions consumed in the houses of the inhabitants, &c., &c. This kind of requisition was a source of continual vexation.

We will give some examples of it; but in order to form an idea of what it really was, one must have experienced it.

We can draw any amount of information from M. Délerot, who gives the history of the occupation of Versailles day by day. The municipality, in order to save the town from the horrors of pillage, had resolved to remain at their post. It was a question of suddenly having to feed a whole army and to satisfy the caprices of the numerous staff officers. They set to work, resolved to furnish the enemy with no pretext for violence. From the very first week the demands were such that they recognized the impossibility of satisfying them. The superintendant of the commissariat department of the third army presented a claim at the town-hall, worded thus:—

"REPORT OF THE CENTRAL MAGAZINE.

"According to the orders issued, the municipality of Versailles must supply every day:—

"20,000 litres of wine, 800 cwt. of meat, 270 cwt. of rice, 1200 cwt. of bread, 40 cwt. of salt, 70 cwt. of coffee.

"On September 23rd they supplied: 6000 litres of wine, 71 cwt. of meat, 16 cwt. of rice, 120 cwt. of bread, 21 cwt. of salt, 13 cwt. of coffee, leaving therefore a balance of: 14,000 litres of wine,

729 cwt. of meat, 254 cwt. of rice, 1080 cwt. of bread, 19 cwt. of salt, 57 cwt. of coffee.

"On September 24th were supplied, &c. . . . leaving therefore a balance of, &c. . . ."

This is a bill from a creditor, a relentless creditor who has himself fixed the amount of the debt, has the power to augment it indefinitely, can hold whom he likes responsible for its non-payment, and is free to choose arbitrarily from the scale of penalties reaching from a fine up to the penalty of death, with no resource for the victim but in God's justice. We have said "the penalty of death," and as it is necessary when making such an assertion to give proof, we quote the following from a collection entitled *Les Murailles d'Alsace-Lorraine* (page 256).

"NOTICE.

"The prefect of Meurthe has just conveyed to the mayor of Nancy (the mayor was then M. Welche) the following injunction:—

"'If to-morrow, January 24th, at twelve o'clock, 500 carpenters are not at the railway station, the superintendants first, and a certain number of the workmen, shall be shot on the spot.'"

No doubt this was only intended as a threat, but it was an atrocious one. To return to the requisitions at Versailles.

The requisitions for September 25th remained

without response, for the municipality having given all it had and all that the inhabitants and shops would supply it with, was perfectly unable to make up the deficit. The chief of the commissariat department wrote to them on October 18th :—

"We hereby enclose for the commune of Versailles a list, by which they may see how much has been supplied of the food requisitioned on September 21st for the support of the German troops, from September 22nd to October 8th, and consequently what is the deficit.

"In order to supply this deficit, we have been obliged to apply to contractors : the enclosed list shows that we have had to pay 173,974 thalers, 14 silbergroschen on this account (652,464 frs. 25 c.). We beg the mayor, reserving to ourselves the right to recover future deficits, to remit the above-mentioned sum to the royal superintendent of the third corps, and to inform us of the steps taken in this matter.

"Chief of the commissariat department of the 3rd army,

"JACOBI."

The mayor addressed himself to the Crown Prince of Prussia, who was commanding the third army, and the prince not only annulled this claim, but reduced the daily requisitions, which far exceeded real necessities. A proclamation issued

by the prince gave the following rules for the requisitions for victualling the troops. (We will put in parentheses following each article the regulation rations of a German soldier during a campaign, and shall see that the conquerors led a jolly life at our expense.)

"Each soldier shall receive daily:—

"Bread 750 grammes. (A German soldier's ration in the field is 750 grammes.)

"Meat 500 grammes. (In Germany 375 gr. A French soldier's ration at the same time was only 300 grammes.)

"Bacon 250 grammes. (In Germany 170 gr.)

"Coffee 30 grammes. (In Germany, 25 gr.)

"Tobacco, 60 grammes, or 5 cigars.

"Wine $\frac{1}{2}$ litre, or 1 litre of beer, or $\frac{1}{10}$ litre of brandy. (The French soldier, in the same condition, only receives $\frac{1}{4}$ litre of wine or $\frac{1}{16}$ of brandy.)

"The ration requisitioned for each horse daily is:—

"Oats 6 kilogr. (In Germany 5 kilogr.; in France in our regiments 4 kilogr. 80.)

"Hay 2 kilogr.

"Straw $1\frac{1}{2}$.

"All commandants of detached corps," said the Prince's proclamation, "shall have the right to requisition the food necessary for the maintenance of their troops. Other supplies deemed indispen-

sable for the army can only be requisitioned by generals or officers performing the functions of generals."

The proclamations, however hard, would have had at least the merit of limiting the sacrifices of the town, if they could have been carried into practice. But the municipality never knew the number of the effective. Requisitions were made in wholesale quantities, without any justification being furnished or any objections admitted. They had no means of proving that these requisitions exceeded the amounts actually needed. In reality they did far exceed them.

Besides the requisitions for the actual maintenance of the troops, there were requisitions for clothing, bedding, heating; there were requisitions for horses and carriages; requisitions for the officers, for the sick, for the employés, requisitions for the king, the princes, the ministers. M. Délerot gives the following list. It contains the requisitions for November 8th, "a day," he says, "on which neither more nor less was demanded than on the preceding or following days, and which therefore is a very good example of the average during the six months of the occupation.

"Requisitioned on November 8th.

"11,000 kilos of firewood.

"125 gr. of sealing-wax.

"50 kilos of tallow candles.

"500 kilos of fire-wood for one missing.

"150 earthen pans.

"70 medium-sized jugs.

"200 kilos of wax candles.

"500 kilos of wood for a post.

"150 kilos of coal for the King of Prussia.

"100 small bunches of brushwood for lighting the fires.

"500 five-centimetre nails for the Crown Prince.

"12 broom-handles for the ambulance of the Lycée.

"2 kilos of brown bread for the King of Prussia.

"A curtain for the door, a set of pigeon-holes for papers and several other things for Count Bismarck.

"1000 kilos of wood for Count Bismarck.

"1000 kilos of coke for Count Bismarck.

"50 bunches of brushwood for lighting fires for Count Bismarck.

"250 kilos of wood for the chancellery offices.

"250 kilos of coke for the chancellery offices.

"60 bunches of brushwood for lighting the fires for the chancellery offices.

"500 kilos of wood for one missing.

"200 kilos of coal for M. de Moltke.

"5 kilos of oil for the Prussian outposts.

"6 kilos of tallow candles, for a detachment of the 8th regiment at St. Cloud.

"1 coffin for the castle.

"2 coffins for the Lycée.

"3 graves in the cemetery.

"20 kilos of tallow candles for the barracks.

"2 large soup-tureens for an ambulance.

"20 zinc pails.

"40 bottles of seltzer water.

"1 coffee-roaster.

"46 pairs of drawers.

"3000 kilos of wood.

"20 kilos of sugar.

"12½ kilos of soap.

"1 chimney sweep doctor to make repairs.

"1 cubic metre of wood.

"10 kilos of wax candles."

One might write a commentary on each article.

Firewood.—17,300 kilos of firewood in one day, not counting 1650 kilos of coal and coke. Even this was not enough. The Prussians devastated parks and avenues; they even destroyed partition-walls and furniture. A householder, on seeing a whole pannel of his partition-wall thrown on the fire, complained to an officer; the Prussian taking his cigar out of his mouth for a second, replied laconically, "The fortune of war!" The

mayor made incessant complaints, but without getting any redress. After the Prussians had left, enormous clearings were found in the woods of Versailles, and magnificent trees which had been cut down and not carried away. "They cut down a tree in order to heat a single saucepan," said the mayor.

Sealing-wax.—The administration, the prefecture, the police, all requisitioned the most insignificant things: tables, inkstands, pens, sand, sealing-wax, wafers, brooms, broom-handles.

As an example:—

"The mayor is requested to furnish two stable-brooms to His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Saxe Weimar.

"Sanctioned,

"General in Command,

"De Voigts Rhetz."

On November 7th, they demanded two small pairs of scissors, ten sponges, twelve combs, 300 chamber articles, two baskets; there were about a 100 articles of the same importance on the list.

"*Two kilos of brown bread for the King of Prussia.*"—This will go down to posterity as a testimony to the simplicity of the king's pleasures, who used to amuse himself with throwing this bread to the carps in the great basin. Nails for

the Crown Prince! A set of pigeon-holes for Count Bismarck!

Wax Candles.—210 kilos of wax candles, without counting seventy-six kilos of tallow candles, and five kilos of lamp-oil. The king's residence was always lighted *a giorno.* But in spite of this profusion, part of the candles which were daily supplied in accordance with the requisition were on sale by the Jews who had followed the army, and many of the other requisitions went almost directly from the town-hall to their shops. A man who let out carriages on hire, and from whom an officer took his carriage on the high road, stated that it was let out several times during several days before it was returned to him.

A coffin for the castle, two coffins for the Lycée, and three graves in the cemetery.—The administration requisitioned coffins for Prussian soldiers who died of their wounds!

Drawers.—Forty-six pairs of drawers on November 8th. A mere nothing. The requisitions were often of a very different kind. Here is one on November 9th. "An unavoidable necessity compels me to impose a requisition on the town of 6000 shirts, and 2000 pairs of boots.

"If the delivery is not made by the time indicated, the administration will be obliged to

search each house with the troops in order to supply their inevitable necessities.

"All these articles must be delivered by the 18th of this month.

"De Voigts Rhetz,

"Major-General and Commandant."

On another occasion 6000 blankets were requisitioned, and it was insisted that they should be furnished that very day.

"If not, forty soldiers shall be quartered upon each municipal councillor, and to-morrow 5000 soldiers shall leave their barracks and be quartered on the inhabitants, where they must have both beds and blankets." The municipal councillors had to beg the blankets from door to door, and so managed to supply the number demanded. "We have only this blanket for both of us," said the mother of a young child, "and we shall probably suffer a great deal from the cold, but we must do the best we can. . . . Take it, for the Prussians must not burn our town." Besides the requisitions addressed directly to the municipality, there were also requisitions for bread and wine, which were supplied by a central depôt organized for that purpose by the council. At the same time that the mayor furnished the long list of articles which we have already enumerated, on November 8th, the central

depôt delivered twenty-three hogsheads of wine, and 7.772 kilogrammes of bread. The town was obliged to lodge and entertain boarders at the different hotels at its expense. M. de Voigts Rhetz, "Major-General and Commandant," had in forty days, up to the 4th November, 1870, expended at the Hôtel de France 7406 frs. 90 c. When he left he owed, or rather the town owed on his account, a bagatelle of 24,894 frs. 40 c. The expenses of the German Princes at the Hôtel des Réservoirs amounted to 62,218 frs.

The burden of these exactions was aggravated by the arrogance, brutality, and sometimes the cold-blooded cruelty with which they were carried out. The soldiers forced their way in, or broke their way into a house, scaled the walls, or drew their swords in order to get food and drink, and carried off jewels and clothes. One day the soldiers entered the Reinert Brewery, opposite the prefecture, and demanded drink. They were told that it was no longer a brewery, but was now only a refuge for fugitives. They drew their swords and fell upon the refugees, two or three of whom were seriously wounded. "Occurrences of this sort were so frequent," said M. Délerot, "that we should not mention this if it had not taken place as near as it was possible to be to King William's residence." Captain Ritouret,

a wounded prisoner, was cruelly beaten at only a few paces' distance from a Prussian post. M. Roche, head of the Versailles ambulance was attacked by a squad, struck from behind without provocation, and thrown down bleeding on the pavement of the Rue du Chantier; a drunken soldier thrust his sword into the groin of an old woman who was passing; she had to be taken to the hospital. In the Passage St. Pierre a tradesman, M. Dax, whose house was being searched, received a sabre-cut, which laid his head open to the bone, in trying to defend his son. A packing-case maker, who was met by some soldiers a few steps from his door, was beaten and wounded for refusing to give them the address of a house of ill-fame. Debauchery was general, open, and indecent. Drunkenness also was very general.

The officers were not always more civilized than the soldiers. They forced their way into houses, opened the wardrobes, had dinner served to them, chose their bedrooms without any consideration for others; several took the room of the daughter of the house.

An officer of about thirty enters the house of a former councillor of the court at Amiens, M. Hamel, an octogenarian who lived alone on his retiring pension. "I have only two rooms,"

said M. Hamel mildly, "mine and my servant's." "I shall take yours, my orderly will occupy your servant's—now for supper." M. Hamel answered, "that the officer must wait until the supper he had ordered was ready." That person burst out into invectives, adding that the Prussians had taken Mont Valérien, that Paris was short of provisions and was going to surrender, &c. &c.

To these ejaculations of a madman, the venerable M. Hamel only answered by some timid words, trying thereby to give the conversation a less violent turn, when suddenly he fainted, and in a few minutes breathed his last sigh. . . . The officer left the apartment, saying he should go and find a lodging elsewhere.

This was not the only case of sudden death. A young woman, who was in bed owing to a slight indisposition, was so frightened at the pertinacity of a soldier who wanted to instal himself in her house, that she died before his eyes. Several of the inhabitants, whose strength was exhausted, not being able any longer to control the continual state of fever and irritation caused by the presence and the brutality of the Prussians, became mad or imbecile. Count Bismarck said to M. Rameau, "It is strange to see how little the inhabitants of your town have the *sentiment of the state of war*."

De Zernicki, a lieutenant of police, had demanded five kilos of wax candles. The grocer to whom he had been directed to apply, either because his stock was already exhausted, or for some other reason, did not comply with his demand. De Zernicki, in a towering passion, goes to the town-hall and pours out a torrent of abuse upon the councillor whose office it was to see to the requisitions; M. de Montfleury, a man universally respected, answers him quietly that he will do all that is possible. But M. de Zernicki, losing his temper, declares that if in six hours the candles are not brought to the Boulevard du Roi (where he lives) he will put the municipal councillor and the mayor in prison. At this moment, the councillors coming out from their council and hearing these words, one of them said to M. de Zernicki: "Who are you, who threaten thus?" "Immediately M. de Zernicki drew his sword, and, having threatened the persons who were present and unarmed, went out for five or six soldiers, with whom he returned, and arrested and carried off M. de Montfleury, and one of his colleagues, M. Laurent-Hénin." This statement is taken literally from a letter written on the same day by M. Rameau, the mayor of Versailles, to the governor (commandant de place).

Residence in Versailles became so intolerable

that several of the inhabitants, who were not detained by their civic duties, left the town. Some who still felt strong enough, joined Chanzy's army. The Governor-General for the north of France then issued the following decree :—

"1st. The mayors are immediately to draw up lists of persons belonging to their communes, who being there now are liable according to the French laws to conscription, either for the army or the National Garde Mobile.

"2nd. The mayors at the same time will draw up a list of those men in the commune who are under forty-six years of age, whether they have been subject or not to conscription.

"3rd. The mayors must give a copy of these lists within a week to the prefects, sub-prefects, or functionaries filling their place (military or civil).

"4th. In case of the clandestine departure, or the unaccounted-for absence of any individual named in the lists above mentioned, their parents, and guardians, or families, shall be fined fifty francs for each absent individual for each day of his absence.

"Our civil and military authorities will be instructed to make domiciliary search amongst the individuals named on the list, in order to insure the strict execution of the above orders."

The Prussians, who did not wish to let the inhabitants go away, did not either wish them to come back. The presence of the King, of the Crown Prince, and of Count Bismarck kept them in a perpetual state of anxiety, and inspired the most extraordinary regulations. If one went outside the gates of the town to see the aspect of Paris from afar, or to breathe a little fresh air, an hour afterwards on returning one was obliged to prove one's identity in order to be able to get home. One ran the risk of being searched, or taken between two soldiers to headquarters at the Place du Château.

The curé de Montreuil was conducting a funeral to the cemetery; the Prussians stopped the procession, and had the coffin opened in order to make sure that it did not contain weapons. A clerk employed at one of the Lycées who had walked behind Count Bismarck, probably without knowing the name of the great man who walked before him, was suspected of intending to assassinate him. The clerk was arrested; luckily for him he had no weapon with him. M. de Voigts Rhetz issued the following decree:—

All men over sixteen years of age, non-resident in the town of Versailles, are warned, if they do not wish to subject themselves to immediate arrest and severe punishment, to possess themselves of,

and carry on their person a permit to reside, which will be granted at the office of the commandant."

People lived at Versailles under the rule of the sword, without extenuation or disguise. There were no newspapers but the official organ of M. de Brauchitsch, the *Union Libérale* having refused to submit to the dishonourable régime which it was sought to establish. M. de Brauchitsch merely demanded the right to have such articles as it should please him to have written by his secretaries inserted in the paper. On this condition the *Union Libérale* was free to discuss "French" politics. MM. Bersot and Scherer would have become the collaborateurs of a Prussian prefect. M. de Brauchitsch was answered thus: "The Council of the *Union Libérale Démocratique*, having considered the conditions communicated by the civil commissioner, has decided that the journal shall cease to appear." There were no French tribunals. M. de Brauchitsch had issued an order to the tribunal to administer justice "in the name of the Government which is recognized by your country as well as by all the countries of Europe, that is to say, in the name of the Emperor" (letter dated October 31st). The judges had unanimously answered that they refused. Consequently the Prussians constituted themselves sole judges, as they were sole legislators. They had established

a court-martial "which could inflict no other punishment but death," but the commandants, civil commissioners, the prefects, and even the police inflicted very elastic penalties, viz., fines varying from 100 fr. to 50,000 fr., arrests, sentences of ten years' hard labour, of internment in Germany, confiscation, &c. &c. Imagination, in this particular, when it is wholly free from the tutelage of the law, has no limits.

"All persons shall be punished with death who, not belonging to the French army, and not establishing their profession as soldiers by any outward sign, serve the enemy as spies, mislead the German troops when they are serving them as guides . . . , damage the telegraph wires, or lines of railway . . . " (From the Crown Prince's proclamation, September 24th). Punishment of death also for those who escaped from Paris in balloons; for those at Versailles who corresponded with the besieged; for franctireurs who had wounded or killed, or attempted to wound or kill, a Prussian soldier. The German staff officers absolutely refused to recognize the franctireurs as soldiers. When they captured them, they did not consider them prisoners of war, but tried them for personal assault. If no especial accusation could be brought against them, they were, for the sole fact of having carried a weapon without belonging to

the French army, condemned to ten years' hard labour in Germany. The order, signed by the Governor-General, M. Fabrice, is dated January 16th, 1871.

In almost every case the communes to which the "guilty" belonged also suffered. "The communes to which the guilty belong, as well as those on whose ground the criminal action has been committed, shall be liable to a fine equal to the annual amount of their land-tax."

Here is an edifying note on the responsibilities of communes, from the *Moniteur Prussien* (October 22nd).

"Yesterday afternoon, while the cannons in the direction of Bongival were thundering, the rumour of an attempt on Count Bismarck's life spread through the town. It was said that a ball had hit the Federal Chancellor's servant as the former was in the act of mounting on horseback to go to the scene of battle. This rumour, happily for the town of Versailles, was quite without foundation. Not a shot had been fired, either at Count Bismarck or his servant, or any of his suite. The story may be ranked with innumerable other fantastic reports which for some time past have supplied the inhabitants of Versailles with topics of conversation.

"At the same time, we think it well to remind

the inhabitants of the town, that, according to the Prussian laws and proclamations, the whole commune is held responsible for the acts and deeds of private individuals, when they are directed against the army of the German Government. Thus, the town of Étampes has been fined 40,000 frs. because the telegraph wire has been cut on its territory. The municipality of Étampes, in order to prevent the recurrence of similar acts, has immediately established a special service for the preservation of the telegraph wires."

This responsibility often involved other penalties than mere fines. We must bear in mind the "notice" that we have already quoted. "If 500 workmen are not ready at a certain place by ten o'clock to-morrow, a certain number of those present will be seized and shot on the spot." Quite near Paris we have another instance of the division of penalty as the Prussians understood it.

On October 21st the German troops had been temporarily repulsed and driven out of Bougival. The Prussians pretended that they had been fired upon by the villagers. This might have been the case; though what makes it highly improbable is the statement of the *Moniteur Prussien* that the shots were fired "with air-guns." Whether the aggression was or was not committed, this, accord-

ing to the *Moniteur Prussien* was the revenge:—"The soldiers, furious at finding civilians taking part in the combat, rushed into the houses from whence the shots were fired, and arrested nineteen individuals, who next day were brought before a court-martial *ad hoc*. Two of the men were condemned to death. The execution took place yesterday, October 24th, at Bougival. The commune is condemned to pay an extraordinary fine of 50,000 fr. The houses from whence the shots were fired on the German troops are to be burnt to the ground: thus a few fanatics have plunged a whole commune in mourning."

One of the inhabitants of Bougival was brought to Versailles covered with wounds and taken to the civil hospital. His account, taken down by M. Délerot, was not in accordance with that of the *Moniteur Prussien*. He stated that during the fighting some Prussian soldiers had come into his house, and had taken him to an adjoining wood with about twenty of the villagers. There, without the least resistance on their part, without the smallest demonstration of hostility, without their having even said a word, the soldiers, exasperated by the retreat of their regiment, fell upon them with their swords, and went off leaving them all for dead. The poor fellow had several deep wounds in his head.

The few inhabitants left at Bougival were to quit the village, in conformity with the following notice which was posted on the walls, and which has been copied word for word :—

"By command of the tenth division of the Prussian army, all inhabitants of Bougival are ordered to quit this village. The men will obey this order at once, to-day, the women and children by twelve o'clock to-morrow. All persons who do not obey this order will be punished by military law." They did not always go through the formality of a court-martial *ad hoc* in order to shoot people. There was a proclamation forbidding people to go into the wood of Meudon, and commanding the troops to fire on all those who should disobey the order. Another ordered all the male inhabitants to retire to their houses directly the alarm for the German army was sounded. "From the moment that the signal for the alarm has been given, all inhabitants found in the streets will be shot without any form of trial."

At Versailles one day the troops were treated to a pillage. On January 19th, the landwehr poured into the Boulevards of la Reine, Clagny, and Montreuil. The soldiers entered the houses either with the consent of the inhabitants or by force; and broke open the doors of empty houses with hatchets. They spent the night

searching from the attics to the cellars; all the cupboards were opened and emptied. Pictures and looking-glasses which could not be carried away were broken in pieces. They left the next morning, literally bending beneath their burdens. Some, who were wise, had got carts into which they heaped soap, jam, beer, wood, women's clothes, pots and pans, clocks. One of the soldiers said, "Every time that M. Trochu makes a sortie, we shall come and break everything in Versailles."

Two days afterwards the Prussians discovered a hiding-place in the barrack of the Rue de la Bibliothèque, where the officers and soldiers of the last French regiment had collected all their valuables. The trunks were broken open, and they divided among themselves the money and jewels down to the last article of clothing.

One of the most astonishing facts, because it is impossible to understand its reason, is the burning of several houses at St. Cloud, deliberately set fire to by the German army after January 28th, that is to say, after the capitulation, without any act of aggression or any infraction of the military laws as enacted by the Prussians, on the part of the inhabitants or proprietors of these houses. M. Luce, living at 15, Rue Saint Pierre, wrote to M. Rameau: "I was the proprietor of a house which

I had bought, where I lived quietly after forty years of work. The day before yesterday, January 30th, at half-past nine, in spite of the guarantee afforded us by the armistice, a horde of German bandits, armed with bundles of straw daubed the walls and doors with some inflammable substance, and now my house is only a heap of ruins. . . . ." M. Hazard, 76, Rue Royale, wrote that they had burnt his house, his only property: "this act of barbarism," he said, "I have the proof attested by witnesses, took place on the Monday after the signature of the armistice." Lastly, the mayor of St. Cloud, M. Senard, a deputy, and one of the most distinguished members of the Paris bar, gives the following details in a letter addressed to M. Jules Simon: "The inquiry which I have held at St. Cloud has proved that the Prussians have burnt systematically, one by one, more than 500 houses, and that a great many of these houses were burnt, either on January 30th, as were those of Messrs. Luce and Hazard, or on the 31st of January, or the 1st and 2nd of February.

"All these fires were lighted by detachments of ten men, of whom five carried the instruments of destruction, and five, armed, assisted in the execution. I have among the records at the town-hall an order dictated by his compassion to

a staff officer, which is a written proof that this destruction was the voluntary work of superior authority."

The ratification of the preliminaries of peace were exchanged, as we have said, on 2nd March, 1871. At that time, independently of the prisoners of war, many remarkable men who had been carried off as hostages were in prison in Germany. All those who were invested with any authority during this fatal period, owing to the confidence reposed in them by their fellow-citizens, incurred personal danger. The most fortunate got off with imprisonment, or fines, or were obliged to submit to have soldiers placed in charge of their goods like bailiffs. Some were condemned to the disagreeable and perilous office of serving as buffers to the German locomotives.

Those concerned were informed of this measure by the following notice:—

"Several damages having been committed on the railway lines, the Governor of the third German division has issued an order that the trains are to be accompanied by some of the best known and most respected inhabitants. These persons shall be placed on the locomotive in such a manner as to make it evident that any accident caused by the hostility of the inhabitants will first fall upon their own countrymen."

M. Dauphinot, mayor of Rheims (now a senator), was ordered to send a person of consideration the next day to the station to take his place on the locomotive of the first train. He refused. He was told that no excuse would be accepted, and that if necessary recourse would be had to force. The next morning, he went himself and took his place on the locomotive as far as Chalons. On returning to Rheims, he summoned the council, who applauded his resolution and his conduct. A list of volunteers was then commenced which in two days obtained eighty signatures.

We have before us and now copy the order "de service" addressed to M. Warnier, since deputy for Rheims and one of the most eminent members of the Assembly of 1871.

"Headquarters, Reims." ('Commandanture' was the strange barbarism which the Germans tried to introduce into the French language for 'Commandement.')

"By a superior order, in virtue of a requisition from the authorities at Rheims directing locomotion,—one of the chief inhabitants shall accompany each morning and evening train. Consequently you are requested to be at the passengers' station to-morrow morning at $6\frac{1}{4}$, and to hold yourself at the disposition of the employé

who is there. Military measures will be resorted to in case of absence or unpunctuality. If unforseen circumstances should prevent you from coming to the station you must immediately inform the governor, adding the word *Citissime.*

"Rheims, Nov. 8th, 1870."

The mayor of Rheims, M. Dauphinot, who only remained by the formal and reiterated order of the Prussian governor, was never arrested; but M. Rameau, the mayor of Versailles was less fortunate. He was the mayor of a royal residence, and of the town which was the head-quarters of the army of investment; besides, he had the misfortune to have M. de Brauchitsch for his antagonist. We can never sufficiently praise the activity, courage, devotion, and consummate knowledge of administrative law which he displayed. During those terrible five months, we cannot reproach him with having uttered a bravado or made a concession; he was unceasingly patriotic, humane, and he unflinchingly did his duty.

The council had contracted with a German merchant called Hirschler for provisioning the town. The order, which amounted to more than 300,000 frs., did not arrive on the day fixed by M. de Brauchitsch's requisition. This was not the fault of M. Rameau or the council; the German army had arrested the convoy. The delay was

its work. Brauchitsch undertook to punish the municipal council and the town for it. He imposed a fine of 50,000 frs. This time the violation of justice was too flagrant: to punish, the French for a fault committed by the Germans! The council refused to pay, and M. Rameau was put in prison. The whole town was in mourning, the more so as they did not know whether this arrest was not the prelude to a transportation. Let us note a curious detail: the mayor was in prison on January 1st, and it was there that the governor, M. de Voigts-Rhetz paid him his visit of ceremony in full uniform. The fine of 50,000 frs. was paid, not by the whole town, but by a voluntary subscription. The readiness with which the subscribers came forward, proved the popularity of M. Rameau and the three municipal councillors who shared his captivity.

Among the French citizens who were transported to Germany, there was one whose fate excited universal sympathy: this was M. de Raynal, a young magistrate, who was only guilty of having corresponded with his father, who was inside Paris and ill. M. de Raynal, vice-magistrate at the Tribunal of Versailles, occupied apartments beneath those of M. de Moltke. M. Stieber, who examined him, did not fail to insist on this fact.

"You spy the movements and secrets of the

General Commander-in-Chief and send them to your father, who is at the head of the government in Paris."

"I assure you that is not the case," replied M. de Raynal. "I have only written one letter, which was about the health of those who are dear to me. My father is not at all at the head of the government in Paris, he is first attorney-general (premier avocat général) at the Court of Appeal."

"You lie! . . . Who contrived to get your letter into Paris?"

"I cannot tell you. I cannot show my gratitude by denouncing a person who has done me a favour."

"Nevertheless you must give the name, or you will be shot. . . . Will you say the name?"

"I refuse."

"If you refuse, it is because there is a secret correspondence organized by one of your countrymen. You will not give the name, but we shall know it without your help."

"Then why ask me?"

"In order to give you the only chance of saving your life."

They called as witness against him, one of his colleagues, M. Harel, who showed the same firmness, and by his courage incurred the same fate. They were both transported to Germany, at the

same time as M. Thiroux, one of the postal officials, who was condemned for having secretly facilitated the interchange of letters amongst his fellow-citizens. The Prussian post only conveyed open letters from Frenchmen to Frenchmen. M. Thiroux had rendered great services. Mme. Tuilier a post-mistress, was condemned to one year's imprisonment for the same offence.

At Strasburg seven persons who had formerly been employés of the French post-office, and of whom one was the post-mistress at Molsheim, were brought before a court-martial as guilty of continuing to exercise their functions after the German conquest. The post-mistress was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of 200 thalers, two postmen to six month's imprisonment and a fine of 50 thalers, and the others to smaller punishments. We might record many instances of the courageous devotion of post-office officials. Madlle. Dodu, who has since received the cross of the Legion of Honour; M. Lefébure, a post-office clerk at Saint-Germain, put in prison at Versailles; Madlle. Wipper (now Madame Naumann) post-mistress at Seutheim, who was imprisoned for refusing to distribute the enemy's letters; M. Rouber, the postman at Fenestrange, who several times risked his life, &c.

One of the staff of the *Journal des Débats*,

M. d'Alaux, was very near being sent into Germany. He was prosecuted for a rough draft of an article, written before the invasion, and which he had not even sent to the paper. He was kept in prison from December 23rd until February 2nd. A long letter written by him to M. Délerot is full of the most interesting and most harrowing details. It ends thus :—"M. Budde" (the German commissioner who had examined him) "had me brought into court on the morning of February 2nd, and said, 'All is over in Paris and I have to announce to you that no further steps will be taken in your case. You are even saved from transportation to Germany, which was the intention of the superior authorities (haute police) in the case of your acquittal.'"

Transportation to Germany was inflicted on the most futile and various pretexts. Sometimes it was a mayor or municipal councillor who was held responsible for a fault committed without his knowledge, and by a foreigner, but on the territory of the commune: sometimes it was a patriot condemned for not choosing to be the instrument of Prussian vengeance. Most of these were persons of note: Baron Thénard, a member of the Institute, M. Voisin, who was afterwards préfet de police, Doctor Thomas, who heard when he was in prison at Magdeburg of his election as deputy

for Rheims, two other doctors at Rheims, M. Hanrot, M. Brébant, etc.

Neither the capitulation of Paris nor the signatures of the preliminaries of peace softened the Germans. On February 12th they still made arrests at Versailles. On the 13th the municipality was required to proceed to the cleaning of the barracks. "The cleaning must commence to-day at two o'clock, or a severe punishment will be inflicted."

At length the hour of deliverance which had been so ardently longed for arrived. Versailles, which was to be the seat of the French Government, was evacuated on March 12th. "They are in a hurry to see my back," said Count Bismarck. He was surprised at this, and even hurt.

Several thefts were committed at the last.

The Prussians carried off the clocks, which are more common in France than in Germany, because we have chimney-pieces which have almost always a clock on them, whereas the Germans have only stoves. Lieutenant de Zernicki, of the police, by way of setting a good example, loaded a cart with clocks, objects of art, china, linen, and women's garments; in a word, he dismantled the house in which he had lodged. The porter, named Dunon, tried to oppose this pillage, as was his duty; but he was beaten, wounded by two sword-cuts, and thrown into the prison of Saint-Pierre.

The signature of peace did not deliver all our departments. For many of them the German occupation succeeded the invasion.

During the war the enemy divided that part of France which it had conquered into four general governments established at Strasburg, Nancy, Rheims, and Versailles. The following, according to the official German press, are the resources and population of these governments. We must consider the population as only approximative. For instance the department of Vosges had in 1869, 400,000 inhabitants; in 1872 it had 392,988. In the document from which we quote it is put down as 418,998 in 1871 :—

	Inhabitants.
"The Government of Strasburg consists of portions of the departments of Meurthe and Moselle with about. . . .	519,291
Of the department of Bas-Rhin	588,970
Of the department of Haut-Rhin	530,285
	1,638,546

"The Government of Lorraine consists of the remaining portions of Meurthe and

	Inhabitants.
Moselle with about . .	561,252
Of Meuse . . .	301,653
Of Vosges . . .	418,998
Of Haute-Saône . .	317,706
Of Haute-Marne . .	259,096
	1,858,705
"The Government of Rheims consists of the department of Aisne	565,023
Ardennes . . .	326,864
Marne	390,809
Seine-et-Marne . .	354,400
Aube	261,951
	1,899,047
"Lastly, the head Government of Versailles was at first composed of the departments of Seine-et-Oise . . .	555,727
Oise	401,247
Somme	572,640
Seine-Inférieure (without Havre) . . .	692,768
Eure-et-Loire . . .	290,753
Loiret	337,110
	2,850,272
"But by an imperial decree, dated February 7th, it was increased by the following	

departments and their populations:—	Inhabitants.
A part of Orne . .	300,000
Eure	394,467
Sarthe	465,619
Indre-et-Loire . . .	325,193
Loir-et-Cher . . .	275,757
Yonne	372,589
Seine	100,000
	2,233,625"

The document from which we are quoting concludes thus:—

"The total number of French who are at the present moment under German government amounts to 10,276,198 inhabitants, not counting those parts of the departments of Doubs, Jura, and the Côte d'Or, where, according to the first article of the convention, dated January 28th, 1871, the line of demarcation still remains to be drawn. Therefore, more than a third of France is occupied by the German armies."

There are some mistakes in these Prussian estimates. The numbers are generally exaggerated. On the other hand, in reckoning up the figures which they give, we arrive at a sum total of 10,480,195 inhabitants, instead of 10,276,198. Anyhow they are right in their general con-

clusion: the Germans occupied a third of France. According to the convention of February 26th, immediately after the exchange of ratifications, their army was to evacuate the departments of Calvados, Orne, Sarthe, Eure-et-Loir, Loiret, Loir-et-Cher, Indre-et-Loir, and Yonne, containing 2,837,062 inhabitants and the departments of Seine-Inférieure, Eure, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, Aube, and the Côte d'Or, up to the left bank of the Seine. Adding the population of the departments which were partially liberated to those which were wholly evacuated, we may say, that at the ratification of the treaty of peace at least 4,000,000 Frenchmen regained their country. After the final signature to the treaty, and the payment of the first half milliard, the departments of Somme, Oise, and the remainder which was still occupied of Seine-Inférieure, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, and Seine, were to be liberated, which would bring up to 5,500,000, the total of French inhabitants freed from the presence of the Prussians. Finally, after the payment of two milliards, the Germans would only occupy six, the departments of Marne, Ardennes, Haute-Marne, Meuse, Vosges, Meurthe, and besides the district of Belfort, the whole consisting of a population of about 2,200,000 inhabitants.

Let us bear in mind that there were two distinct classes, one consisted of those departments which Germany considered as belonging to her, which she intended to annex, and in fact did annex, that is to say Alsace and Lorraine: the other consisted of those departments which she occupied by right of war, and only during the war. After the definitive treaty which put an end to the war, she evacuated a great many of the departments, which then re-entered the French family; the others were evacuated in proportion as France paid the ransom by an arranged series of payments. But the departments which thus remained in the hands of our creditors were no longer, strictly speaking, invaded; they were occupied; occupied as pledges and as territorial guarantees for the payment of a debt. According to Article 8 of the preliminaries of peace they were still under the Prussians, who were to govern them, to collect the taxes, and to administer justice.

The first thought of the Government of the Republic was to restore to these unhappy departments our laws and our administration, thus reducing the army of occupation to its true character, that is to say, the rôle of brokers in charge. The Germans gave a helping hand. They were equally anxious to get rid of the

administration and the police, and to restore them to us. They took care to protect their interests by hard and humiliating reservations. This was the object of the convention of March 15th, 1871, containing the following terms :—

"Convention for carrying out the Armistice.

"Art. 1. Although the right to administer the occupied territories has, by Article 8 of the preliminary treaty, been reserved to the German authorities until the conclusion and final ratification of the treaty of peace, nevertheless the German authorities consent that the departmental and communal administration, including the care of public safety, and the maintenance of order in those departments occupied by German troops, shall, after the ratification of the present agreement be handed over to the French authorities on the conditions hereinafter mentioned.

"Art. 2. The French Government may reinstate the prefects, sub-prefects, mayors, and other administrative agents, with the powers which are given them by law.

"On its side the German authorities will place near the officer in command (chef du corps), or wherever they may think necessary, civil commissioners, who will have superior jurisdiction in all that concerns German interests.

"The French functionaries are requested to

conform to those measures which the civil commissioners consider advisable on the subject.

"Art. 3. The French tribunals will resume their functions as well as the justices of the peace and magistrates. The police will be reorganized.

"Nevertheless a state of siege, with all its consequences will be maintained by the German authorities in the occupied departments.

"Art. 4. In accordance with the prescriptions of Article 8 of the peace preliminaries, all French administrative authorities must conform to those measures which the officers in command shall think necessary for the safety, maintenance, and distribution of the troops.

Art. 5. In the case of the interests of these latter being compromised between this date, and the final ratification of the treaty of peace, the German authorities reserve to themselves the right of cancelling all or part of the rights conceded to the French authorities in Articles 1, 2, and 3."

It is evident that this convention only established French administration under the orders, and at the good pleasure of the German Government. They burdened our Government, and its agents of all degrees, with an overpowering responsibility, for order had to be maintained, and the dignity of the French administration preserved at a time when it

seemed almost impossible. The German yoke weighed more heavily than ever on the administration, but on it only. M. Thiers and his ministers laboured hard to procure this great relief for the people.

The convention was signed at Rouen by M. Fabrice, and M. Pouyer-Quertier, and is dated March 16th, 1871.

An agreement which was annexed regulated the taxation. The French Government recovered the right to collect the taxes, not in virtue of a concession from the German authorities, but by the sole fact of the ratification of the preliminaries. They agreed that the French Government should undertake the arrears which might still be due up to the day of the ratification, with the exception of their remedy against the departments and communes. Several of the Prussian prefects had made most exaggerated estimates of the indirect taxes; at Versailles they had assessed them at one and a half times the amount of the direct taxes; in other places they had exacted the payment of a sum of 25 francs, and even 50 francs per head. Article 7 of the agreement stipulated that a sum equalling the amount of the direct taxes should be held to represent that of the indirect taxes, and Article 8, that in those departments where a poll tax of from 25 to 50 francs had been levied, that

portion which was paid after February 26th, and which exceeded a sum equalling the direct taxes, should be returned. No collection even of the arrears of taxes could henceforward be made by the French Government, which bound itself to take the place of the German Government within five days of the signature.

The definitive treaty of peace signed May 10th, 1871, altered none of these conditions, which remained in force till the total liberation of the territory. Only one of the articles of this treaty (Article 8) had reference, not to the relation of the French authorities to the Germans, but to the collection of the taxes. It said that—"If in spite of the reiterated demands of the German Government, the French Government be behind-hand in fulfilling its obligations for the maintenance of the German troops, the soldiers shall have the right to procure for themselves what is necessary, by levying taxes and requisitions in the occupied departments, and even outside these if their resources are not sufficient." This was about equivalent to a threat of resumption of hostilities; but the case provided for by Article 8, never occurred, and the vigilance of the French Government anticipated all causes of dissension, and even serious claims.

The occupied departments, therefore, began to

resume their French appearance, so to speak, from March 16th, but with a continuance of the state of siege, and with the presence of the Germans, armed with a very effective right of control over the French administration. The prefects and mayors accepted this position with courage, the inhabitants with joy.

Independently of the difficulty of the German troops living side by side with the French population, the maintenance of the army of occupation was an inexhaustible source of dispute. All details relating to this great affair had been regulated by a convention signed March 11th, and known, under the name of the Convention of Ferrières, of which the following are the chief characteristics.

Up to January 1st, 1872, the German military administration would undertake to feed the army of occupation at the expense of the French Government. All requisitions were forbidden. The French Government to pay 1 franc 75 cents for each ration of food, and 2 francs 50 for each ration of fodder to October 1st, and 2 francs 25 cents from October 1st to December 31st. After January 1st, 1872, the French Government should itself feed those German troops who still remained in France, under elaborately enumerated conditions set forth in the convention. They should,

in order to exercise this right, inform the German Government of their intention before October 1st, 1871. The notice was not given. The prices were certainly very high; but M. Thiers shrank from the difficulties of a daily dispute with the German authorities as to quantity and quality. We should have multiplied causes of strife almost indefinitely, and means would have been found, by dint of exaggerated requirements, to take from us the benefit of our intervention. It is needless to say that the amount to be paid for rations was calculated on a scale in proportion to the evacuation, as the evacuation was scaled in proportion to the payments of the indemnity. Before 1st October the first loan had been subscribed with great ease; the revenue was coming in satisfactorily; we had ourselves paid the Germans 1 milliard 450,000,000; and we were preparing to pay another milliard and a half at the end of October. In face of these facts, M. Thiers felt convinced that he should be able to anticipate the payments, and consequently to obtain the removal of the army of occupation long before the time agreed upon in the treaties and conventions.

The rations for food and fodder were not the only burdens which the presence of an enemy on her soil imposed upon France. In the six

departments which were to be evacuated last (Marne, Ardennes, Haute-Marne, Meuse, Vosges, and La Meurthe), each town or village, which was occupied by at least a battalion, a squadron, or a battery of artillery, had to furnish, according to the terms of the convention, all the military establishments required by the troops, with the necessary furniture, and firing, and lighting according to the Prussian regulations, i.e.—

Lodging for the officers;

Lodging for the troops;

Guard-houses;

A drill-room (salle de discipline);

Workshops for the workmen belonging to the corps;

Clothing-stores;

Offices for the officers of the corps, and the administration;

Regimental schools;

An infirmary;

Swimming-baths, if there is any watercourse sufficiently deep;

A covered riding-school, if there is one, or else an open one;

Shooting-ground for infantry and cavalry practice;

Parade-ground;

Provision and fodder stores;

The necessary space in the slaughter-house, in a bakery, and in a forge.

The troops first took up their quarters in public buildings, or buildings especially hired for them. If these were not sufficient, they were quartered on the inhabitants with "*place au feu et à la chandelle*," according to the traditional formula.

Finally, the French Government had to procure at its own expense for each garrison or corps, a furnished warmed and lighted room, where the officers could meet in the day, and take their meals together. They also had to supply a kitchen.

If, owing to any manœuvres which the troops had to make, it was necessary to establish bivouacs, the French Government had to furnish the straw and wood required. Any damage done to the fields would be paid for by the Prussians at the valuation of experts who would be appointed by both parties. If the hiring of carts and horses which might be required by the German troops for conveying provisions or ammunition came to more than forty centimes for each draught-horse per kilomètre (nothing being allowed for the return journey), the fact should be verified by the municipal authorities, and the French Government would have to pay the surplus. Then followed several stipulations with reference to the ambulances. "Such invalids as cannot be removed

whom the German army shall leave either now or later, in the evacuated departments, shall be maintained at the expense of the French Government until they can be removed."

The convention then fixed the price of silver for international relations. The thaler was to be worth 3 fr. 75 c.; the German florin 2 fr. 15 c. It authorized the re-establishment of the telegraph wires, giving the employés of the German telegraph, in the chief towns of the departments, the right of control with regard to the contents of the telegrams, and the order of their transmission. Official German despatches were sent gratis, as those of our own Government, and were given the preference. Besides, the German wires remained intact, and were kept up at our expense. The German postal service was continued; we could re-establish ours, on condition that it was subject to the control of the German authorities, and transmitted gratis the private correspondence and remittances of money and articles for all members of the army of occupation. The last article of the convention stipulated that there should be no duty paid on the merchandise, arms, and articles of clothing and equipment destined for the German army, and addressed to the military commanders of this army.

These were the regulations to which part of our

departments had to submit until the whole of our debt was paid off. The number of the troops and the quantity of rations to be supplied would decrease, in accordance with the payments made, in the following proportion :—

At the time of the convention, we had to pay for 500,000 rations of food, and 150,000 rations of fodder.

After the ratification, and the payment of the first half milliard, the amount decreased progressively to 150,000 rations of food, and 50,000 rations of fodder.

Four weeks after to 150,000 rations of food, and 30,000 of fodder.

A fortnight after the payment of the first 500,000,000, the food-rations were reduced to 120,000; they fell to 80,000 after the payment of 1,500,000,000. Finally, after the payment of the first 2,000,000,000, France had only to pay for 50,000 food-rations, and 18,000 rations of forage per day, being equal to a contribution of 132,500 francs a day, or 3,975,000 francs a month, over and above our other burdens.

It may be seen from hence what the government of occupation was which followed the government of invasion; less rigorous, yet oppressive, and perhaps more humiliating, because it was by consent.

During the debate of June 8th, 1871, M. Thiers implored the deputies to give confidence to the

country by banishing every element of discord from their deliberations.

"By this means, the only one in your power, you can restore confidence to industry, reawaken and renew it, and so turn into another channel those who blindly rushed into civil war.

"We have enormous burdens, burdens greater than France has ever yet had to bear; we must face them.

"The first thing we have to do is to provide the means necessary to obtain the liberation of the territory.

"Gentlemen, no one can appreciate the full meaning of these words, 'liberation of the territory,' who is not entrusted, as are my colleagues and myself, with the affairs of the country at this moment.

"These words contain, in the first place, dignity; for a great nation like France, which has a past of which it is proud, to see a powerful foreign army close to its gates, is a grief which oppresses me daily, from which, gentlemen, I suffer daily, and which deeply humiliates my whole soul.

"Yes, dignity; but it is of suffering dignity that I speak. Ah, if you but knew the details! Not to be able to order a single movement of the troops, a single movement of war-material, with-

out being obliged to have recourse to the will of a stranger! To be afraid that at any moment some high-spirited and imprudent young man, moved by the most generous feelings, may provoke a collision—and it is not without reason, it is not idly that I tell you this,—to deliver up Frenchmen whose only fault is that of being imprudent from excess of patriotism and courage, to give them up in order to avoid giving birth to the most dangerous conflicts, this is a grief which weighs upon us daily.

"And this is not all: in order to save our population the cruel suffering of a foreign occupation and the overwhelming burdens which it brings, we have been obliged, with your approval, to negotiate a treaty with the German army. You know what is the custom: a victorious army, either sojourning or in retreat, has the right of living upon the country which it occupies or passes through, that terrible right of victory to which we are forced to submit. We have been obliged to make agreement that we would ourselves maintain the German army."

When M. Thiers spoke thus, it was not, as at the end of the occupation, only six departments which were occupied and for which we had to pay 132,500 francs a day. We had to furnish daily, until the payment of the first half-milliard, 500,000

provision-rations, 150,000 forage-rations, equal to 1,125,000 francs per day, or nearly 34 millions per month. Even after the payment of the first half-milliard, our expenses were at the rate of 391,500 francs per day, 11,745,000 francs per month.

Besides this, foreign produce having free entrance into our country, and the presence of the foreign army facilitating all manner of frauds, we could not raise our indirect taxes. The tax on tobacco brought in nothing, or next to nothing; and although south of the Loire the tax was maintained nearly as it had been before the war, there was a deficit of 400,000,000 francs in our receipts. It has been seen that under the system of requisitions every Prussian soldier had a right to five cigars a day. When requisitions were done away with and replaced by a sum of money, the German administration, not finding a sufficient supply in our exhausted factories, sent for enormous quantities of tobacco from Germany, which entered duty free, and passed, in part at least, into general consumption.

The terrible situation of our country might be aggravated any day, either by great events, or by the most trivial incidents. The consequences of great events could surprise no one; thus the insurrection of the 18th of March retarded the

evacuation of the territory; this was to be expected. The Germans pretended to believe that the issue of the conflict was doubtful; they proposed to interfere to bring it to an end. They knew that M. Thiers would refuse their help with indignation, but without failing in courtesy, and while even maintaining towards him all outward forms of respect, they gave him to understand that if the civil war should be prolonged, they would be obliged in their own interest to break the truce. It was plain to them and to all the world that in the situation in which we then were, we could not dream of raising a loan and beginning to pay off our debt. Besides, they might be obliged, almost against their own will, to use their cannon. The world had then before it the strange spectacle of three armies enclosed within a narrow circumference, two of which, the French army and the army of the Commune, were cutting one another's throats, while the third, the Prussian army, stood by motionless, but armed. A mistaken aim, the error of a patrol, might bring about a general conflagration. M. Thiers was perfectly sure of the prudence of his own officers, but the greater number of the officers of the Commune knew nothing about their business, and many of them were incapable of calculating the consequences of a rash aggression. M. Jules Favre said in the

tribune during the sitting of the 13th of May, "We have been forced to make daily, repeated efforts to preserve the sad but precious privilege of doing our own business for ourselves."

Some idea may be formed of the daily relations of our Government with the Prussians by the perusal of the following despatch, addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 21st of March, 1871, by M. de Fabrice, commanding officer of the army before Paris.

"In view of the events which have just taken place in Paris, and which give no assurance of the carrying out of any future agreements, the commanding officer of the army before Paris forbids all approach to the lines before the forts occupied by us, demands the re-establishment within twenty-four hours of the telegraph-wires destroyed at Pantin, and will treat the city of Paris as an enemy, if the proceedings there again contradict the peace-preliminaries; this will entail the forts occupied by us opening fire." At the same time that the Government was receiving these menacing letters, the Germans put a stop to the evacuation, they increased the strength of their garrisons at certain important strategical points, and gave general orders to suspend the return of prisoners.

These difficulties occurred several times over,

in various forms, during the course of the civil war. The Commune had armed the ramparts, which was contrary to the most formal stipulations of the convention of the 28th of January. The Germans several times announced to M. Thiers that they were going to summon the insurgents to withdraw their cannons; both M. Thiers and M. Jules Favre represented to them, that if they made such a summons without effect, they would then find themselves obliged to intervene in our quarrel by force of arms. They did not leave off repeating this threat to the very end. M. Jules Favre encountered it on the 20th of May, the eve of the exchange of ratifications, in the mouth of Count Bismarck. "Confess," said the Chancellor of the Empire to him, "that we have the right a thousand times over to employ rigorous measures. You are not struggling against a party, but against a horde of brigands who have violated the laws on which all civilization is based. Can we look on with folded arms while public monuments are overthrown, private property destroyed, the Archbishop perhaps murdered? Our abstention is already incomprehensible; we can only promise it to you for a very little while, and even then without binding ourselves." M. Jules Favre telegraphed this declaration to M. Thiers. He immediately received

the following reply, which reached him at noon on the 21st May. It exactly describes the situation as a whole. "Let Count Bismarck make his mind quite easy," said M. Thiers. "The war will be brought to an end in the course of this week. We have made a breach on the side of Issy. The work of enlarging it is going on at this moment. The breach at La Muette is begun, and is well forward. We shall undertake another at Passy and at Point-du-Jour. Our soldiers are working under fire, and but for our great battery of Montretout such boldness would be impossible. But works of this kind are subject to so many accidents that we cannot assign a fixed term for their accomplishment. I entreat M. de Bismarck, in the name and for the sake of order, to leave to us the repression of this anti-social brigandage, which has established itself in Paris for a few days. To act otherwise would be to occasion fresh injury to the party of order in France, and consequently in Europe. Trust the matter to us, and within the week the cause of social order shall be avenged. As for our prisoners, I sent you word this morning what were the proper points of arrival: it is too late to have recourse to sea-transport. The cadres of the regiments are all ready at our inland frontiers, and the prisoners on arrival will be enrolled in them immediately.

We shall not wait for them, however, before taking action, but they are a reserve, ready in case of need. A thousand affectionate remembrances." This despatch, and the pressing arguments of M. Jules Favre, half convinced Count Bismarck, and made him pause; he still said, however, "We can bind ourselves to nothing."

At last came the telegram announcing victory:—"The army is in Paris. The corps of General Douai is making its entry at this moment. . The corps of Generals Ladmirault and Clinchant are moving up to follow him. We hold the Trocadero, the Arc de Triomphe, the École Militaire."

Even the defeat of the insurrection did not put an end to the apprehensions caused us by the Prussians. In consequence of a mistake, easy to understand, Marshal MacMahon's troops had established their outposts at twenty-five paces from the German lines in the neighbourhood of Rainay, Lilas, and Romainville. News of this came to M. Jules Favre from Berlin. It was on the 16th of June, the day of the triumphal entry of the German army into the capital of the empire. In the very midst of this military fête Count Bismarck wrote the following despatch:—"I am informed through the reports of our generals that your

soldiers are occupying the ground reserved for our troops in the zone of Rainay, of Lilas, and of Romainville. I have the honour to warn your Excellency that if they do not immediately retire within their own lines, our troops will attack them this very day, at mid-night."

Such was our position.

It may be considered as certain that if the Prussians had been led by the civil war to resume hostilities they would have treated with the Emperor. They did not disguise the fact. They said with undeniable sincerity that it mattered little to them whether we had a Monarchy or a Republic, but they added that they could only treat with a Republican government on the condition that this government was legally constituted, everywhere recognized, and sovereign in the country. M. Thiers negotiated inch by inch. The discussion between the two Governments was full of surprises. Whilst the gravest questions were being negotiated on either side, there arose an incident which in any other circumstances would have been insignificant, but which endangered the whole affair. The definitive treaty was, however, successfully concluded during the insurrection, an unhoped for success which was entirely due to the talent and firmness of M. Thiers' government.

The treaty was signed at Frankfort on the 10th May, 1871, by MM. Jules Favre, Pouyer-Quertier, and De Goulard for France, and Counts Bismarck, and Arnim for Germany. The ratifications also were exchanged at Frankfort on the 20th of the same month.

Count Bismarck, founding his opinion on the character of the French people and on the immensity of the sacrifices imposed on us, believed that while submitting for the present to the exigencies of the situation we should only seek to gain time in order to prepare secretly for our revenge. It needed all the authority and all the talent of M. Thiers, admirably seconded by M. Jules Favre, and by M. Pouyer-Quertier, to convince him of the sincerity of the Government and of the National Assembly. They succeeded at last; but it was still more difficult to get him to admit that we should have power to carry out our resolutions. Our plenipotentiaries fought downright battles with him to obtain the continuation of the evacuation; but on this point he was inexorable. He consented to make the treaty of peace, but on condition that the army of occupation should remain among us until the end of the civil war. Terrible were the sufferings which the leaders of the Commune imposed upon the invaded departments, heavy the burden that

they laid upon our exhausted treasury. If the Commune had been prolonged, it would have turned France into a second Poland.

The treaty of the 10th of May contains eighteen articles.

The first article related to a new delimitation of the frontiers. Germany ceded to us a few cantons in the district of Belfort, and took a few others on the borders of Alsace-Lorraine by way of compensation. Our plenipotentiaries held with reason to the importance of not allowing Belfort to be a fortress enclosed, in a manner, by the enemy's territory. But as they had to give in return several places which had been declared French in the preliminaries of peace, they would only consent to make of this first article the enunciation of a double proposition destined to form, if it was adopted, the basis of a definite convention of exchange.

Here is the text of the first article :—

" The distance between the town of Belfort and the frontier-line, such as it was first proposed at the time of the Versailles negotiations, and such as it is found marked out on the map annexed to the ratified deed of the preliminary treaty of the 26th of February, is considered as marking the measure of the circumference, which, in virtue of the clause relating thereunto in the first article of

the preliminary treaty, ought to remain to France with the town and fortifications of Belfort.

"The German Government is disposed to enlarge this circumference in such manner that it shall comprehend the cantons of Belfort, Delle, and Giromagny, as well as the western division of the Fontaine canton, lying west of a line to be traced from the point where the canal between the Rhone and the Rhine comes out from the canton of Delle south of Montreux-le-Château, up to the northern border of the canton between Bourg and Félon, where this line should join the eastern border of the canton of Giromagny.

"The German Government will not, however, cede these above-mentioned territories except on condition that the French Republic shall on its side consent to a rectification of frontier along the western borders of the cantons of Cattenom and Thionville, which shall leave to Germany the territory east of a line starting from the Luxembourg frontier, between Hussigny and Redingen, leaving to France the villages of Thil and Villerupt, passing on between Erronville and Aumetz, between Beuvillers and Boulange, between Trieux and Lomeringen, and joining the old frontier-line between Avril and Moyeuvre.

"The International Commission mentioned in art. 1 of the preliminaries of peace shall assemble

on the spot immediately after the exchange of ratifications of the present treaty, to carry out the task entrusted to it, and to trace out the new frontier in accordance with the preceding stipulations."

The piece of territory on the borders of Luxembourg ceded by this article contains rich mining districts; by this cession we made our frontier-relations with the Grand Duchy more difficult and less secure; and lastly we had the sorrow of causing the expatriation, and this time voluntarily, of a large number of French citizens. Strategical considerations had determined the Government, and determined the Assembly also to accomplish the exchange. A stronghold would not be sufficient to close the gap of Belfort; thanks to the annexed territory we should henceforth possess on the east a real and solid frontier. The superficies of territory ceded to Germany by this article is 10,000 hectares; population, 7000. Superficies of territory restored to France, 6000 hectares; population, 27,000.

Article 2 lays down that the inhabitants of the territory ceded to Germany, that is to say, the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine, who might choose to remain French citizens, should continue to possess their real estates situated in the territory annexed to Germany. "By means of a declara-

tion made before the competent authority, they shall enjoy the right of removing their domicile to France, and of taking up their abode there, without any interference with this right from the laws concerning military service."

Articles 3 and 4 relate to the archives of the ceded territories, and to the sums expended on various accounts by the departments, communes, public establishments, and private persons.

By virtue of article 5, it is agreed that the two nations shall enjoy equal rights in all that concerns the navigation of the Moselle, the canal between the Marne and the Rhine, the canal between the Rhone and the Rhine, the canal of the Sarre, and the navigable waters communicating with these waterways. The right of wood-floatage to be maintained.

Article 6 has for its object to bring all the ecclesiastical delimitations of the different denominations into agreement with the new political situation.

Article 7 is very important; it regulates the payment of the 5,000,000,000.

According to the preliminary treaty of peace, we were bound to pay 1,000,000,000 in the course of the year 1871, and the 4,000,000,000 remaining had to be paid off by the 2nd of March, 1874.

These two stipulations are maintained.

1,000,000,000, therefore must be paid in the course of 1871. France must also pay 500,000,000 in the thirty days which should follow the re-establishment of the authority of the French Government in Paris.

Another 500,000,000, making the fourth, had to be paid by the 1st of May, 1872. Thus, by this date of the 1st of May, 1872, France would of necessity have paid 1,500,000,000 for 1871, and 500,000,000 for 1872.

The three last 1,000,000,000 were to bear interest at 5 per cent., dating from the 2nd March of the current year (1871). This interest to be paid annually, on the 3rd March. All sums paid in advance on the last three milliards to cease to bear interest from the day on which payment should have been made.

The payments could only be made in the chief commercial towns of Germany, and were to consist of metal, gold or silver, in Bank of England notes, Bank of Prussia notes, notes on the Royal Bank of the Netherlands, notes on the National Bank of Belgium, in bills to order, or in first-class bills at sight.

As may be seen, notes of the Bank of France are not included in this enumeration. An agreement, dated the 21st May, 1871, authorized the

French Government to pay in Bank of France notes, but for this time only, a sum of 125,000,000. This concession was made on the double condition that the 125,000,000 should be entirely paid up before the 15th of June, that is to say, a fortnight before the date fixed by the treaty of the 10th of May, and that an equal sum of 125,000,000 should be paid in the sixty days following the date fixed for the payment of the first 500,000,000.

To return to the analysis of the treaty of peace and of article 7. Paragraph four determines the rate of exchange. "The German Government having fixed the value in France of the Prussian thaler at three francs seventy-five centimes, the French Government accepts the exchange of moneys between the two countries at the above-mentioned rate."

Paragraph five says that "the French Government shall inform the German Government three months in advance concerning every payment which it intends to make to the treasury of the German Empire." The necessity of giving warning three months in advance occasioned us great loss. It was afterwards modified in a manner favourable to our interests, but we never could obtain an authorization to pay in the sums as a running account.

Paragraph six laid down that after the payment

of the first 500,000,000 and the definitive ratification of the treaty of peace, the departments of the Somme, the Seine-Inférieure, and the Eure should be evacuated. According to the terms of the preliminary treaty, this first evacuation was to include the departments of the Oise, the Seine-et-Oise, the Seine-et-Marne, and the Seine as well; but the proclamation of the government of the Commune determined the Prussians provisionally to continue the occupation of these four departments. This was, as it were, the gift of joyous accession from this fraternal and democratic government, inaugurated in Paris during the day on the 18th March. "The evacuation of the departments of the Oise, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, and the Seine, shall take place," says the article, "as soon as the German Government shall consider the re-establishment of order as well in France as in Paris sufficient to ensure the execution of the engagements contracted by France." A seventh paragraph adds that this evacuation shall in any case take place on the payment of the third 500,000,000, the German plenipotentiaries holding with reason that the payment of a sum total of 1,500,000,000 would be the most formal demonstration of the establishment of order in France.

"Paragraph eight.—The German troops, in the

interest of their safety, shall have at their disposal the zone situated between the German line of demarcation, and the precincts of Paris, on the right bank of the Seine.

"Paragraph nine.—The stipulations of the treaty of the 26th of February relating to the occupation of territory after the payment of the 2,000,000,000, shall hold good. None of the deductions which the French Government may hereafter have a right to make can be exercised with regard to the payment of the first 500,000,000."

Article 8 recalls and upholds the convention of 11th March, 1871, called the convention of Ferrières, relating to the maintenance of the German troops. According to the terms of this convention, requisitions in kind were done away with, and in their place our government paid for rations of food and fodder, first at the rate of 500,000 rations of food, and 150,000 of fodder *per diem;* then four weeks after the ratification of the treaty of peace and the payment of the first half-milliard, at the rate of 150,000 rations of food and 50,000 rations of fodder. But article 8 of the definitive treaty of peace specially subordinated these reductions to the evacuation of the forts round Paris, which could be retarded by the Germans until they should consider that order was sufficiently estab-

lished. In fact, the Paris forts on the right bank of the Seine were not evacuated until between the 12th and the 21st September. We had paid the first half-milliard by the 15th July, 1871. The reduction of the number of rations ought to have commenced by quarters from this time and to have been completed by 15th August, according to the 4th article of the convention of Ferrières; but it did not begin for more than a month later, after the evacuation of the last forts round Paris in virtue of article 8 of the definitive treaty of peace. (St. Denis was evacuated the 20th September.)

Article 9 prolongs for six months from March 1st the exceptional treatment then accorded to the importation into France of the industrial products of the ceded territories.

Article 10 relates to the return of the prisoners. Until the evacuation of the forts on the right bank of the Seine, the army of Paris and Versailles shall not exceed 80,000 men, and the French Government shall not concentrate any troops on the right bank of the Loire.

Article 11 decides that commercial treaties between France and the different German States having been annulled by the war, the two Governments shall take as a basis for their commercial relations reciprocity on the footing of the most favoured nation.

Article 12.—The war will change nothing, either as to residence, property, naturalization, nor legal delays in the position of Germans in France, and of Frenchmen in Germany.

Article 13.—German ships, which have not been condemned by the Prize Court before 2nd March, 1871, shall be restored with their crews.

Article 14th.—Each Government on its own territory shall continue the works undertaken for the canalization of the Moselle.

Article 16.—The two governments undertake respectively, to cause to be respected and to keep in order the tombs of soldiers buried in their respective territories.

Articles 15, 17, and 18 are mere formal articles. Then follow the additional articles relating to the Eastern Railway Company. The French Government will buy back and give up to the German Government the concession for the railways situated in the ceded provinces, with their property and plant, for the sum of 325,000,000 francs.

The third and last article of this additional convention was for the augmentation of the territory round Belfort by the addition of the following villages :—Rougemont, Laval, La Petite Fontaine, Romagny, Félon, La Chapelle sous Rouge-

mont, Angeot, Vanthiermont, La Rivière, La Grange, Reppe, Fontaine, Frais, Foussemagne, Cunelières, Montreux-le-Château, Bretagne, Chavannes-les-Grandes, Chavanattes, et Suarce. When the National Assembly was called upon to ratify the definitive treaty of peace, during the debate on the 18th May, 1871, the following words were said by M. de Meaux, the reporter, which will also be the verdict of history: "Two things appear incontestible and evident; they are, that if the foreigner came down upon us nine months ago, it was the Empire which brought him; and if he still remains near Paris, it is the Commune which keeps him."

According to article 7, § 1 of the treaty of peace, the first half-milliard should be paid within the thirty days which followed the fall of the Commune. This payment, like all the others, was to be made with the securities enumerated in the fifth paragraph of the same article. We have said, however, that by a special agreement made at Frankfort the 21st May, and by undertaking to pay in anticipation another sum of 125,000,000 of the second half-milliard, the French plenipotentiaries managed to gain acceptance, but for this time only, of 125,000,000 in the Bank of France notes. This sum was paid in three instalments, i.e. 40,000,000 on June 1st, 40,000,000 on June 8th, and

45,000,000 on 15th June. The Treasury effected these payments out of the disposable balance of the loan of 1,330,000,000 made to it by the Bank of France. If we add to this 125,000,000 the 325,000,000 for the purchase of the concession of the Eastern Railway by the Germans, we shall see that the remaining proportion of the indemnity (two milliards) to be paid by 1st May, 1872, was reduced to one milliard 500,000,000. It was in order to meet this payment of three half-milliards, and the different expenses involved in the loan and operations of the treasury, in order to pass these sums from the French to the German exchequer, that the debt for two milliards was contracted; a loan of three milliards being eventually required to complete the payment of the debt. The bill for the loan of two milliards was brought before the National Assembly on the 20th June.

At this date we had a deficit of 649,000,000 for the year 1870, and a deficit of 987,000,000 for the six first months of 1871 (from the 1st January to 20th June). This last figure is obtained from a comparison of the expenses paid, (two milliards 647,000,000) with the receipts, amounting after different subtractions and additions to one milliard 660,000,000. In all we had a deficit of 1,636,000,000 for the two years 1870-71.

The Bank having lent us 1,330,000,000, we had

only 306,000,000 to find. These 306,000,000 were added to the floating debt, which was very small, being only 650,000,000.

This situation in itself was good; and more especially so when we take into account the general state of affairs.

Now here is a short account of the expenses we had to incur. We had to rebuild many ruins both in Paris and in the departments; to pay indemnities to those who had suffered from the war; to repair our line of defence; to reconstitute the army. We had also to bear the expenses of the army of occupation, expenses which at the time of the loan exceeded a million a day, but which would be reduced to about three quarters after the evacuation of the forts round Paris. Lastly, we had to pay from the 2nd March of the current year interest at the rate of 5% for the three last milliards of the indemnity.

We had borrowed 1,330,000,000 from the Bank 3% reducible. We wished to increase and in fact did increase, our debt to it to 1,500,000,000. The Bank, which lends to the public at 6%, lent to the State at 3% in 1871, and at 1% in the following years, because the State had, by an act passed 29th December, 1871, authorized it to increase its issue, from a maximum of two milliards 400,000,000, to two milliards 800,000,000, and by

article 4 of the act of 15th July, 1872, (the law authorizing the loan of three milliards,) to three milliards 200,000,000. We could not ask the Bank for more than one milliard 500,000,000. It bore this burden easily, for the notes suffered no depreciation from it; but we could not have exceeded this amount without risk, and the State is as much interested in its prosperity and credit as the Bank itself. We therefore appealed to the public for the larger part of the loan, and as it was necessary to deal carefully with the public and to try the strength of the State, we began by a loan of two milliards in June.

The loan was issued at 5°/₀, in order to leave less margin to the creditor.

Estimating the interest for the new loan at 6°/₀, the annual increase of interest on the debt in consequence of the war amounted to 356,000,000. It consisted of: the Magne loan (under the empire) 30,000,000; the Tours loan, 15,000,000; for military pensions (we had taken the military funds), 10,000,000; for the Bank, 15,000,000 (1,570,000,000 borrowed at 1°/₀); for the railways (the repurchase of the Eastern), 16,000,000; for the loan of two milliards (at 6°/₀), 120,000,000; for the interest of the last three milliards (at 5°/₀), 150,000,000.

We must add that these arrears of interest on

the last three milliards were paid to the Germans; that they were owing from 2nd March; that the loan destined to cover the capital was necessarily issued at 6°/₀, like the first loan (the one of two milliards), which would increase the "Rente" by 1°/₀, and that, thanks to the prohibition put upon our paying on running accounts, we should find ourselves compelled to pay, sometimes 5°/₀ to the German, and sometimes 6°/₀ to the French creditor, on the same capital. In short, at first it appeared that we must reckon on 400 to 420 millions for fresh expenses.

The unforeseen disclosed itself by degrees; claims to indemnity for damages flowed in. From 420 millions we went to 488, then to 650, and finally to 740. The revenue of France amounting, according to the most trustworthy estimates, to from 15 to 17 milliards; this terrible increase in our expenditure was not more than we could bear.

The law was passed unanimously by 547 voters on 20th June, 1871. It was promulgated the next day. The loan was opened to public subscription on the 27th. It produced 2,225,994,045 francs, which were to be paid in seventeen instalments, i. e. the first on application and the sixteen others monthly from 21st August, 1871, to November 21st, 1872. The loan was subscribed more than twice over, and those who applied had only 45°/₀

of their application allotted them. It might have been feared that there would be a difficulty in getting the calls paid up. This was a point of capital importance, for we were bound to make our payments at fixed and frequent times, which were near together. M. Thiers had reckoned that the subscribers would wish to anticipate their payments, and he was not mistaken, for the seven first instalments out of the seventeen (including the payment on application) yielded 1,750,418,000 francs.

Let us say at once that the loan of three milliards has produced still more remarkable results. It amounted really to three and a half milliards, for the Finance Minister was authorized to take the sum necessary to meet those arrears which would be due in 1872 and 1873, and to cover the expenses of the loan as well as those of discount, exchange, transport, and negotiation. The issue of three and a half milliards was subscribed more than twelve times over. In two days (28th and 29th July) the world offered France the loan of a capital of forty-two milliards 641 millions. The loan, authorized on July 15th, 1872, and opened to public subscription on the 28th, yielded 3,498,744,639 francs to be paid in twenty-one instalments, the first on application and the others monthly from the 21st September,

1872, to April, 1874. The subscribers had already paid at the end of December, 1872, in five instalments (counting the payment on application), the sum of 2,130,868,000 francs. They paid again in January, 1873, the sum of 234,650,000 francs. When the last payment of the indemnity was made to Germany in September, 1873, there only remained to be paid up 451,283,000 francs of the loan 3½ milliards. And on the 30th July, 1874, only 7,136,000 francs.

The great difficulty was doubtless to find the milliards; and this difficulty was triumphantly surmounted by M. Thiers. But the operation of paying the money, when once they had got it, into the German treasury, was still more difficult.

It was a question of passing five milliards from one country to another, without disturbing the economic balance of the world. This demanded a consummate knowledge of business, great care, the most minute attention to detail. The success obtained by M. Thiers, and the Finance Ministers who succeeded him, in this difficult operation, has been complete, and although it is less striking in the eyes of the general public than the success of the loan, it argues a far higher degree of those qualities which make a great financier. M. Léon Say goes so far as to say, in a very learned and interesting report laid on the table of the assembly,

5th August, 1874, that "the transference of a capital of 5 milliards from France to Germany without a crisis, is a fact which has only become probable by its accomplishment." All M. Thiers' friends have often heard him repeat that this operation was his *chef-d'œuvre*. He has himself written an account of it, which will form part of his posthumous works.

In the payments made to Germany, the notes of the Bank of France amounted to 125,000,000.

	Francs.
The repurchase of the Eastern Railway	325,000,000
French gold	373,000,000
French silver	239,291,875
Making a total of . . .	1,062,291,875

The rest was paid in legal tender (*numéraire*) and foreign securities. The operation was then especially a Stock Exchange operation. The subscriptions to the first loan yielded 213,000,000 francs, and the subscriptions to the second 389,000,000 francs in foreign bills (*changes étrangers*). The ulterior successive payments on the first loan yielded 186,000,000, and on the second 985,000,000 in bills, so that in these two transactions the treasury received 1 milliard 773,000,000 francs in foreign securities. The guaranteeing syndicate, on its side, furnished

700,000,000 in foreign bills. One milliard 774,000,000 were bought on the market; that is, one milliard 78,000,000 for the first part of the payment, that of the two milliards, and 697,000,000 for the second and last part of the payment, that of the three milliards. These figures do not include the assets which gave rise to remittances in specie, for instance those from Hamburg.

The French treasury employed four means of collecting these foreign securities, amounting to 120,000 different kinds, from notes for less than a thousand francs up to draughts for more than 5,000,000

The first consisted in facilitating the first subscription to foreign loans, or, what comes to the same thing, the payment by foreign securities of the subscriptions made in France.

The second, analogous to the first, consisted in facilitating the anticipation of payments to be made abroad or made in France by means of foreign securities.

The third was the agreement made by the treasury with a syndicate of the great banking houses in Europe, guaranteeing to furnish 700,000,000 in foreign bills.

Lastly, the fourth, and the principal, was buying them direct on the market.

A still greater difficulty than that of contract-

ing the loans and operating the payment was that of increasing the taxes in necessary proportion, and securing their collection. The operators tried this several times, and these hesitations are easily accounted for. First, they did not know till later the precise amount they needed. Then they encountered, both in the Chamber and in the country, an insurmountable repugnance, which obliged them to change their tactics. The first plan agreed upon was brought before the Assembly by M. Pouyer-Quertier on June 12th, 1871. We will only give the details of those taxes which were increased or created.

REGISTRATION AND STAMP DUTIES.

	Francs.
A double *décime* on the rights of registration for different products	31,000,000
A double *décime* on stamp duties	15,500,000
Duty on foreign personal property after decease .	5,000,000
Repressive duties and registration of leases . .	15,000,000
Fire and shipping insurance duty	15,000,000
Newspaper-stamp duty .	8,500,000
Total . .	90,000,000

Customs.

Net produce of the taxes and new additional taxes.

	Francs.
Additional tax on foreign and colonial sugar . .	14,000,000
Coffee	20,000,000
Petroleum oil . . .	10,000,000
Textile fabrics . . .	70,000,000
Raw material and others .	100,000,000
Manufactured materials .	10,000,000
. . . . .	15,000,000
Navigation	5,000,000
Total . .	244,000,000

Indirect Taxes.

Additional tax on sugar .	19,000,000
Additional tax for the right of transport of wines, cider, &c. . . .	16,000,000
Additional tax on the duty on the general consumption of brandy and spirits	58,000,000
Additional tax on beer .	4,500,000
Additional tax on the licence for public-houses .	5,000,000
Additional tax on playing-cards, tobacconists, &c. .	1,500,000
Suppression of the tobacco *Zones et décimes* . .	20,000,000

	Francs.
Match tax	10,000,000
Tax on the manufacture of paper	10,000,000
Tax on chicory . . .	5,000,000
Total . . .	149,000,000
POST-OFFICE.	
Revision of the printing-tariff	5,000,000
General total for registration, stamps, customs, indirect taxes, and Post-Office .	488,000,000

The Government, as we have already said, was obliged to remodel these estimates several times.

Besides, the sum of 488,000,000 was far from sufficient. At the time that the Government brought forward this motion, they knew neither the amount of debts contracted during the war, which the War Minister was obliged to sanction, nor the amount of the indemnity for the departments which had been invaded, which was voted later, nor the sums that they would have to repay to the soldiers drafted off for immediate service.

On 12th June they asked through M. Pouyer-Quertier for 488,000,000, and the same minister stated on 14th September, that he must have no less than 650,000,000 of fresh taxes. The

truth is, that this last sum was exceeded by nearly 100,000,000. The receipts yielded by the taxes, or supplementary taxes, created by the National Assembly, amounted in these latter years to 740,000,000.

The Chamber, the Government, the country, were resolutely determined to meet all their engagements, and to withdraw from no sacrifice. All were agreed on this point, but on this point only. When it had become a question of ways and means, there were profound and irreconcilable divergencies of opinion, which were maintained with stubbornness, sometimes with violence.

It would have been better to have made a great effort, to have cut the whole difficulty by some single and considerable measure. That would have been a thousand times better than having recourse to a quantity of small taxes, aggravating details, doubtful experiences, to a system of chicane and expedients. It would have been easier to bear a great wound than this agony of pin-pricks; and such a wound would have been easier to cure. Unhappily the Assembly was not able to have recourse to this unique remedy; such a policy was too strong for it. Divided and subdivided, with little men and long intrigues, it was not made to act on a grand scale.

Was it possible to procure all the necessary revenue by one single act? Yes, certainly; we might have chosen one of three alternatives:—Additional *centimes*, a duty on raw material, an income tax.

Recourse to "additional centimes," is a common expedient; it consists in augmenting all the established taxes in the desired proportion. This would have been short and simple. The people would have paid, in spite of the enormity of the tax.

This solution was expected. It had amongst other merits that of simplicity. It is generally wiser to augment an old tax than to create new ones. All new taxes appear unjust, unnatural, tyrannical; they entail abuses; they are subject to misconstruction, and provoke anger. In asking for an increase of the taxes already established, the Government would only have had to justify the amount of its requirements; but no theory, no party struggle—no division of schools. It was much canvassed in the country; but no one proposed it in Parliament. The two other systems were discussed. M. Thiers had from the very first a great tax in reserve, which he regarded as the only one which was capable of getting us over the difficulty, one which, in his eyes, was as fair as any tax could be; which did not crush our in-

dustries, because while it simultaneously increased their prices it preserved the national market for them; this was the increase on the customs duties, called, in the current phraseology of the Chambers and the Bar, the duty on raw material. The partisans of free trade, who felt that to escape the duty on raw material, they must put something in its place, proposed the income tax. It became almost a daily struggle on these questions in 1872, and the commencement of 1873. We know the result, the income tax was not accepted; the tax on raw material was voted, but against the grain, with unsatisfactory conditions, in insufficient proportions, and the remaining deficit was filled up by petty taxes on soap, chicory, matches, &c., &c. An interminable and insupportable list, which has in reality subdivided the difficulty, but which was far from decreasing it.

M. Thiers, who all his life had been an avowed protectionist, had immediately turned his attention to the customs. Even before the signature of the peace preliminaries, he announced his intention of seeking the larger part of the war expenses in an increase of the customs tariffs. There was a decided majority opposed to this system in the Assembly. In the cabinet, M. Jules Simon, M. Dufaure, M. de Larcy, M. Casimir Pe-

rier, and M. de Remusat, who were in the government together or successively, did not share the views of the Chief of the Executive on this head. The quarrels which had filled the first months of 1870, and which had been interrupted by the war, recommenced with the same bitterness, because of the interests involved. This struggle, which was as old as commerce and industry, had assumed large proportions after 1860. We can still recall, though eighteen years have passed, the sensation produced in France by the commercial treaty with England, a treaty of which we only learned the existence at the end of January, 1860, by Queen Victoria's speech to her Parliament. This act of Imperial despotism, which disposed of our interests without consulting us, or even warning us, was met by all the friends of parliamentary government with violent and unanimous opposition. But though all the liberals were united in condemning the form of the treaty and the clandestine and autocratic manner in which the affair had been carried out, the greater part of them agreed, as to the principle, with the Emperor and his ministry. The treaty which had been concluded was not quite a free-trading one; but by an extensive lowering of the customs duties, it made considerable progress towards free-trade. The school of free-traders, consisting

at that time in France almost exclusively of theorists, was transformed by this striking adhesion on the part of the Government, and became a great party, which in 1870 was still increasing. In the violent debates which took place in the Corps Législatif, M. Thiers, ably seconded by M. Pouyer-Quertier, was the chief of the protectionist party, M. Rouher, M. Forcade de la Roquette, members of the Government, and M. Jules Simon, speaking on behalf of the Left, defended free-trade. It was no longer possible to revive the discussions of those principles in 1871, to recommence the debates of 1860, of 1866, and 1870. M. Thiers himself no longer theorized; he limited himself to pointing out the positions of all our great industries, and the necessity of providing them with markets in the country; the enormous debts which weighed upon us, and gave our rivals a fresh advantage over us; the certain, considerable, and immediate returns from this tax, which he looked upon as our principal resource. As he knew that all the Left with few exceptions professed the doctrines of Free-trade, that the members of the "Appeal to the People Association," were pledged by their antecedents, and that most of the representatives of the wine-growing departments would be on the same side, he took care to protest that the act

should never be anything but an act forced on them by circumstances, a law of necessity; that they would be free to recur, after the long and severe crisis which they must needs pass through, to the discussion even of the principles of taxation. His adversaries took the same line. They only made objections as to the details of execution, of which the following was not the least important. Supposing even that the yield of the duty on raw material was not counterbalanced by a general decrease of our business, and restrictions which, in revenge, our neighbours would not fail to impose on the exports of our commodities and manufactured products, what was wanted and what M. Thiers asked with reason, was, for immediate revenue; and yet he wanted to impose a tax which could only be levied after the denunciation and expiration of the commercial treaties, that is to say, for the greater part in 1878. M. Thiers asserted that the tax on raw material was the only one which could immediately and with a certainty of success be made to yield millions by hundreds. The Free-traders offered him in exchange the income tax, which supplies the deficiencies of the budget in England, and which, according to them, was the most fair tax, because it was the only one which was strictly proportionate.

There was much talk in the press, if not in the Assembly of preferring a tax on capital to a tax on income. These two taxes, although different, and even opposed in their incidence, were both intended to establish an exact proportion between resources and sacrifices, and to bring unity to our financial system.

It was admitted by his opponents, that M. Thiers, who was always on the breach, showed a thorough knowledge of business and untiring energy in the debates. His chief argument against the income tax might be summed up thus:—this tax is quite right in theory; in practice it would be iniquitous. It is quite fair that every one should pay in proportion to what they receive, but one can never know the income and expenses of each individual. There are merchants and manufacturers whose income cannot even be ascertained; there are secrets which cannot be revealed. It would necessitate a controlling department which would become an Inquisition, and a judge who might sometimes be a political enemy. To establish such a system, in a country divided as ours, is to put the fortune of the party who is in opposition at the mercy of the party who is in power. In this bitter and irritating struggle, M. Thiers often won the victory, if to win votes when one has not altered convictions can be called winning. He

said to his intimates, "I shall let them debate upon and reject all the other taxes, but when it comes to the duty on raw material they will be obliged to give in." They consented in fact, as we have said; although not for that reason, but because he resolutely made it a government measure. But the tax which was thus voted with innumerable restrictions, extenuations, and obstacles, only covered a small part of our new debt, and we were obliged, in spite of all, to fall back on the crooked ways and small means. The only valid reason given by M. Thiers, namely, that this tax would get us over our difficulty, was thus falsified by events.

It became, therefore, necessarily, a sort of hunt for commodities which could be taxed. These debates on fresh taxes to be created and old established ones to be augmented lasted as long as the Assembly itself. And they will be continued in succeeding Assemblies so long as the enormous burden which weighs upon us has not been liquidated. Some taxes are easily collected, and yield good results; others make a much smaller return than was anticipated, or are so burdensome, or have such a disastrous influence on trade, that by a sort of public demand, they are obliged to be withdrawn or modified. For a long time to come France will resemble that martyr who was turned

and re-turned on his gridiron, under the pretext of allaying his sufferings. The National Assembly continued to vote fresh taxes in proportion as fresh requirements made themselves felt. They imposed a supplementary duty of more than 40,000,000 on patents; a double duty on receipt stamps, 24,000,000; indigenous, foreign, and colonial sugars which were at first only taxed at 33,000,000, 64,000,000, &c. &c.: they taxed the most necessary articles: wax-candles, soap, cocoa, pepper, salt meat, all species of transport, goods by passenger or luggage train, passengers, transport of wines, &c., all commercial and private transactions, cheques, bills of exchange, sales of good-will and transfer of custom, transmission of securities to bearer, income from all personal property, either in France or abroad.

The list is long and painful, a veritable martyrology; by and by it will be one of our titles of honour.

Besides the aggravation of the burdens of the tax-payers, and of the difficulties of the treasury, this system of having recourse to petty taxes will make their reduction more difficult. We see this already, for, owing to the amelioration in the returns of the old taxes, the reduction has commenced; though it is true that it has only commenced on a very

small scale. At the commencement of 1877, a minister proposes by way of reduction the suppression of a small tax, the tax on soap. Before the measure is voted this minister is overthrown by a political crisis. His successor re-establishes the tax, and proposes in place of its suppression a diminution; for he says we must look to the future. It is as if he were to say that the treasury should never let go its prey when it has once seized it.

We recognize in this the history of the *décime* of the war, which was levied indefinitely after the peace. Of course there is no denying that it is easier to increase a reduced tax than to re-establish one which has been suppressed.

When the income tax had definitely succumbed, and the insufficiency of the customs duties began to be perceived, the deputies gave free scope to their imaginations to find taxable commodities. The repurchase of the railways was proposed, a tax on books used in commerce, on the amount of business, an electoral tax, two loans, one of two milliards, the other of one milliard 500,000,000, to be subscribed under peculiar and novel conditions; a national subscription, a subscription among the women of France; sumptuary taxes, which were ridiculously insignificant, taxes on looking-glasses, on pianos, on perfumery, &c. Some of these taxes which were disdained at first

were afterwards voted, such as the stamp duty on receipts, which is easily collected and yields good results. Other taxes which were voted without difficulty, such as the match-tax, gave rise to dispute when put into practice. Among this mass of propositions, did the Assembly choose the best? It would be rash to affirm that it did, and still more rash to affirm the contrary. The essential point is that after all the treasury has up to the present met all its engagements; and that, however France may set to work to establish her revenue, no one in the whole world has the slightest doubt as to her solvency and her solidity.

The eight milliards that we have paid in two years have shown our wealth, and given incontestible proof of the validity of our engagements. This financial disaster, without equal in history, has had as a result the increase of our credit.

Towards the end of 1871, not only was M. Thiers reassured as to our financial position and the payment of the indemnity; but the strength of our credit, which had been proved by the double loan and the eagerness of the subscribers to take it up even in anticipation, the security of our financial operations with Germany, which were accomplished, contrary to all expectation, without any other disturbance than a passing

monetary crisis of very little importance, which the Bank easily quieted by an issue of small notes (*coupures*); the ease with which the revenue was collected, in spite of the additional taxes and new duties, the internal calm which the country was enjoying, all this series of fortunate events, and the wise conduct of affairs rendered the liberation of the territory certain. This was the ardent wish of all patriots; it was most especially that of M. Thiers, who knew that we could not look upon peace as definitely secured until the last man of the army of occupation had quitted French soil. It was useless for him to negotiate at Berlin and make successful loans; the smallest incident, the imprudence of a child, the blundering of a subaltern, a misunderstood order, might open up the whole question again. The country only saw the difficulties as a whole; the government had to deal day by day with the unforeseen, the absurd, and the unlikely. In this there was a great anxiety, a great humiliation, and a source of constantly recurring alarm.

To give an idea of the anxieties of the Government, and the reasons which made it an imperative duty for them to hasten the evacuation by all means in their power, we will limit ourselves to quoting a passage from a letter to M. Jules Simon, written some time afterwards by M. Jousserandot,

a prefect whose devotion to his duty during those sad days was above all praise. Towards the end of October, 1871, a German soldier from the garrison of Epernay, having been wounded with a knife, very likely in some tavern brawl, the commanding officer had decreed that all the inhabitants were to be in their houses by eight o'clock, and that the doors of the houses were to remain open and the lights burning all night; this with threats of terrible penalties in case of disobedience to these orders. The Mayor, M. Blandin, went to Versailles and to Nancy; he saw M. Thiers, M. de Manteuffel, M. de Saint-Vallier, who was our negotiator, and who managed to relieve the town form the régime of terror that was in force.

"Some time after," says M. Jousserandot, "in this same town of Epernay, a German soldier was stabbed, the wound was very slight. The mayor (it was still M. Blandin, now deputy for the department of Marne), went to the subprefect, who summoned the captain of gendarmerie, and the three went together to the German governor. They told him that he must not hold the populace responsible for a personal action; that they themselves would find out the culprits, and deliver them up to him; for whoever had committed such an act had wronged his fellow-citizens far more than the Germans, and was wholly

undeserving of pity. The governor was mollified by this proceeding, and did not resort to the measures that he had inflicted on the town the first time. The guilty man was arrested and given over to the German authorities, condemned, I believe, to one month's imprisonment in a German fortress, and every one approved.

"Now this fact was nothing in itself," continued M. Jousserandot, "but it happened at a most critical time. It was precisely at this moment that M. Thiers was negotiating with Berlin and Nancy for an anticipated evacuation of the territory. So, as soon as he was informed by me of what had occurred, he showed such uneasiness that I suspected something of the greatest importance. In announcing the facts to him, I had told him that they would give rise to no disagreeable consequences. I kept him hourly informed of all that passed at Epernay, and I hourly received despatches from him, which seemed to be turning a mere tavern brawl into an affair of state. I was soon able to write to M. Thiers that it was all settled. But, remembering the first affair, which had been the cause of so much trouble, he could not believe that this could be terminated so soon, and I remember that at ten o'clock at night I again received a telegram manifesting very great anxiety; and he was only thoroughly reassured when he

heard the account of the facts and the measures of precaution which I had taken. He has often spoken of it since to me here at Lausanne."

Not a day passed without M. de Saint-Vallier's despatches containing some new subject of alarm. M. de Manteuffel, who commanded at Nancy and with whom he had to negotiate, was nevertheless a high-minded man, animated by conciliatory intentions. But how were the thousand occasions of dispute arising from the daily contact of the conquerors and the conquered to be avoided? During the invasion there were no less than 15,000 Germans living in the department of Marne alone. Five thousand of these were quartered on the inhabitants, living with them, eating with them, in fact masters of their houses, and at a time when defeat was so recent and recollections so poignant! M. Thiers had huts erected in all directions. It afforded a great relief to the citizens, and comparative security to him, when the Germans were finally lodged there.

Another trouble, which rendered the termination of the occupation an absolute necessity, was the financial and industrial position of Germany. The manufactures of the country were suffering from the prolonged absence of a million of young men. The material expenses had been terrible; the losses were still more so. The French money

which began to circulate, was far from counterbalancing them. On the other hand, German manufactures were menaced by the introduction of Alsatian products. That little province was entering into a ruinous competition with the immense nation. The Alsatians consumed at the rate of two million men and produced at the rate of forty. The uneasiness was widespread, discontent was increasing. The cabinet policy with regard to the treaty was found fault with, and it was thought that the Chancellor of the Empire had not made enough profit out of the victory; that France was not sufficiently crushed. After having been blamed by Europe for the exorbitance of his demands, Count Bismarck was accused by his countrymen of having shown too much compassion: such is the justice of our contemporaries, who distribute blame or praise according to their own interests. He himself wished to throw upon our markets, not the goods that had been manufactured in Alsace for our consumption—those were already disposed of—but those which were accumulating daily, owing to the activity of the factories, condemned to a long rest during the war, and which the peace had again set working. M. Thiers saw the rising tide of claims; he was deeply distressed by the position of the inhabitants of the occupied provinces;

he felt that if the situation were prolonged it could not fail to bring about serious complications; his two loans, which had been carried out with the happiest mixture of skill, promptitude, and audacity, had succeeded far above his hopes; he had money at his disposal; he saw the great want of money, and the commercial, industrial, and political uneasiness at Berlin; he thought the moment opportune for taking a decisive step towards the evacuation. In accepting office he had proposed a double object to himself: to establish order and to liberate the territory. Order was established; he now lived for the liberation of France.

The object of the first operation to which he applied himself was this: to obtain the immediate deliverance of ten departments by means of some concessions made to Alsatian manufactures.

The negotiation was not terminated on September 16th, 1871, but the Assembly was about to adjourn for a vacation, which was absolutely necessary. This business could not wait. Not being able to ask for the ratification of a treaty which was not yet concluded, M. Thiers called for a decision from the Assembly on the principles of the negotiation.

Our general situation was at this time quite clear. The Commune was suppressed; order

reigned everywhere, the administration had all its departments in regular working order; the Germans, who had overrun forty departments, at the end of the war occupied thirty-six of them; the first treaty concluded by M. Thiers had liberated seventeen, reducing the number still occupied to nineteen. The loans which we had contracted, which had been splendidly covered, and easily collected, had enabled us to make our first payments. After the first half-milliard, three departments were evacuated, those of Eure, Seine-Inférieure, and Somme. There still remained sixteen departments to be liberated, four were those round Paris, and twelve composed the departments of the East. We paid the second and the third half-milliard in a very short space of time, thus procuring the evacuation of the four departments containing or surrounding Paris; Seine, Seine-and-Oise, Seine-and-Marne, Oise. On 16th September this evacuation was only beginning. The object of the negotiations which had been commenced was to effect its accomplishment more speedily, and to deliver the six following departments out of the twelve, which, alas! remained in the hands of the enemy; Aisne, Aube, Côte d'Or, Haute-Saône, Doubs, Jura.

The Germans would only consent to shorten the

term of their occupation by ten months in the six departments on the double condition of certain financial guarantees, and certain concessions to Alsatian manufactures.

Germany asked as financial guarantees for bills at six, seven, or eight months, negotiable bills, which at the same time she promised not to negotiate so long as the Government remained in the present hands. This flattering reservation was repugnant to M. Thiers feelings of loyalty. He did not wish, by accepting it, to make a change in the Government impossible. He even avoided making known the terms which had been offered him. Germany was with some difficulty persuaded to be content with the signatures of the Finance minister and of the President of the Republic; measures were at once taken to insure the payments at the times fixed.

As to the second difficulty, that of the commercial advantage claimed for Alsace-Lorraine, the Government could not sanction it without the consent of the Chamber.

For two centuries and a half Alsace had always taken from France the raw materials for her rich manufactures, and had given her in exchange her manufactured products. This was the state of things which Germany wished to prolong for her annexed province.

This would certainly entail some loss to our national industry, but if France had been able for more than two centuries to bear Alsatian competition without any protection, it could not be very onerous for her to bear it another year and a half, with the help of a successively increasing duty. Any sacrifice appeared easy when it was a question of giving back life to six French departments. M. Thiers and his ministers firmly believed that the proposal would be received with acclamation; on the contrary it met with formidable opposition on the grounds that the proposal was not constitutional, that the Assembly could not be consulted on a treaty which was not yet made, that it should be laid before them complete, for them to veto or to negative. It was, they complained, while the liberation of six out of twelve of the departments was thus hindered, that the whole twelve were not included in the treaty; at last the real reason was given, the other two being only vain pretexts: the French cotton and mineral industries did not want Alsatian competition any more than did the similar industries in Germany.

The President of the Republic had not much difficulty in showing how much exaggerated were the alarms of the French manufacturers, or rather of those who constituted themselves their de-

fenders. They had borne without compensation the competition of Alsace, when Alsace was French, and they feared to encounter it now with the protection of a quarter duty for six months and a half duty for a year! They pretended to believe that English, Swedish, and Swiss manufactures would come into France at the reduced rate by way of Alsace: did they forget the expense of transport and the German customs? That old German manufactures should be fraudulently passed through was a more formidable objection; but every precaution had been taken to prevent this. It was therefore in the name of a temporary interest, an insignificant, not to say a non-existent interest, that a measure was opposed which would immediately deliver six departments from the Prussian occupation. M. Thiers, a protectionist, and an ardent protectionist, was indignant. "Have I not passed my life," he said, "in defending industrial interests? But the interests in question are despicable, and they are brought forward against what? Against the national independence! Gentlemen, I am not easily surprised, but I confess I have been so now, to see a treaty which liberates a portion of our territory so ill received. I tell you my feeling plainly: I, who for the last forty years have defended industrial interests, if I had held in the

scales the interests of the liberation of the territory and the interests of industry, I should not have hesitated for a moment. And I am proud of this, I make my boast of it."

This feeling was so strong in him that he expressed it several times in the same speech, being enthusiastically applauded by the Left. "I need scarcely tell you that I take a lively interest in industrial affairs, an interest which I have proved constantly. I am not a protectionist of the moment, to suit the circumstances of the present day, I have been a protectionist all my life; but there is something which I place above the industrial interests of the country, it is its independence, it is its security."

M. Buffet, M. Raoul-Duval, and M. Peltereau Villeneuve, vigorously opposed the bill. It was carried, at one o'clock in the morning, by 512 votes against thirty-two.

Two conventions were made in consequence of this vote. The first determined the evacuation of six departments out of the twelve, reduced the effective force of the army of occupation to 500,000 men, and fixed the date of various payments to be made by the French government, namely, 500,000,000 for the fourth half-milliard of the indemity, and 150,000,000 for the first year's interest on the last three milliards. The

second convention contained all the stipulations with regard to the entrance of the manufactured products of Alsace.

Several conventions having to do with the payment of the indemnity and the liberation of the territory were concluded after this epoch. That of the 10th of November, 1871 lays down, among other things, that from the 1st of January, 1872, instead of furnishing in kind the food and forage which was due to the army of occupation, at the rate of 50,000 men and 18,000 horses, we should pay 1 franc 75 centimes a day per horse, and 1 franc 50 centimes per man, the whole in gold or silver. The agreement of the 29th of June, 1872, approved by the Assembly on the 6th of July and promulgated on the 9th, fixes the terms for the deposit of the last three milliards as follows: half a milliard two months after exchange of the ratifications of the present agreement; half a milliard on the 1st February, 1873; a milliard on the 1st March, 1874, a milliard on the 1st March, 1875. The power of anticipating the time of deposit is reserved to France, on condition of her not depositing less than a hundred million at a time, and of her giving notice to the German government a month beforehand. Germany undertakes to evacuate the Marne and the Haute-Marne a fortnight after payment of a half-milliard, the

Ardennes and the Vosges a fortnight after that of a second milliard, the Meuse, Meurthe-and-Moselle, and Belfort, after payment of the third milliard, and of the interest which might still be due.

Finally, the convention of the 15th of March, 1873, approved on the 19th of March and published on the 22nd, the last which was concluded by the government of M. Thiers, brought the term of our emancipation nearer by eighteen months. It was agreed that the last milliard, the payment of which was due on the 1st of March, 1875, should be paid in four instalments of 250,000,000 each, on the 5th June, 5th July, 5th August, and 5th September, 1873; also that the district of Belfort and the departments of the Ardennes, the Vosges, Meurthe-and-Moselle, and the Meuse, with the exception of Verdun, should be entirely evacuated in the course of four weeks, dating from the 5th July, and Verdun in the course of a fortnight, dating from 5th September, 1873.

For these great results we were indebted to the marvellous and unhoped-for success of the loan.

"The raising of the five milliards has been successful," says M. Léon Say, in his report of the 4th of August, 1874, "only because it has been, as it were, moulded upon the resources of the country, in proportion as these resources have been opened up.

"The success of this unprecedented operation arises out of the mingled prudence and boldness with which it has been carried out. It was necessary to act speedily in order to obtain the prompt liberation of the territory; speedily enough to employ all actual savings and as much exchange as possible, yet so prudently as not to overstep the limit beyond which we should have had to encounter a grave financial crisis, and also a monetary crisis, which might have renewed the paper-money disasters, happily unknown in France for the last seventy-five years.

"All has been carried out with the greatest wisdom and with rare good fortune. It confers another title of honour upon our great fellow-citizen who accepted this task at the hands of the National Assembly."

On the 15th of March, 1873, a despatch addressed to M. Thiers from Berlin informed him that the last convention was signed. He immediately called all the ministers together in the hall in which they were accustomed to hold their deliberations. Scarcely were they assembled when they saw him enter, holding the despatch high in the air as a sign of joy and triumph.

It was the liberation of the territory.

CHAPTER III.

THE 24TH OF MAY.

I.

When M. Thiers was named head of the government at Bordeaux, he was undoubtedly the most popular man in France.

He had the same influence, the same popularity in the Assembly. But the number of deputies who had absolute confidence in him, and who were resolved to follow his resolutions and his fortunes to the end, was very limited. The extreme Left had many grudges against him; even the Left properly so called distrusted him; they knew him to be a patriot and a Liberal, and they thought he was an Orleanist. The Right could not forget with what pitiless determination he had put an end to the Duchess de Berry's adventurous career; the very place in which the Assembly was sitting contributed to the revival of its recollections. The Orleanists, lastly, who

looked upon him as the necessary head of their party, agreed together that he had first to be won over. They did not admit him to a knowledge of their secrets. They perceived that if he were ever to lend himself to an Orleanist Restoration, it would not be until after he should have attempted in vain to found the Conservative Republic. As for the Bonapartists, they counted for nothing at that period.

In spite of this somewhat confused state of affairs, M. Thiers succeeded in obtaining a unanimity of votes. France by twenty-eight elections, all France and Europe by a sort of public acclamation, imposed this choice on the Assembly. It would have come to it of itself. It had not a single man to set against him. His political capacity was absolutely and evidently unrivalled; all parties were agreed to render homage to his ardent patriotism. He had besides, over and above the authority attached to his position, a sovereign and all-powerful influence. One word spoken by him decided votes and silenced dissentients. It must be added that he was in immediate conflict with Count Bismarck and with the Commune, two terrible powers which he alone could withstand, and that he gave day by day and hour by hour undeniable proofs of the strength of his judgment and the force of his character. He

undertook the direction of affairs with fixed resolutions which he never modified, and which he made a point of rendering manifest by repeated declarations from the tribune, by his correspondence, and by all the actions of his government. These resolutions were, not to be a party-man, to think only of France, and, as he himself put it, of the health of France. It was plain enough that if he succeeded in reconstituting the army, the administration, and the finances, under a republican government, these great results would confirm and consolidate the Republic. He did not work with a view to this result, and he said so; but this result did not alarm him, and so he said also. This position was at the same time so well defined and so well justified that he advanced in the confidence of the Left with giant strides. It might have been believed during the first few weeks that the Right would never throw him over. But those who saw beneath the surface, and who followed closely the movement of parliamentary opinion, did not fail to perceive before long that the battle would come from that side, and that it would be vigorous and formidable, although masked for some time by the semblance of confidence and respect.

The first act of the President of the Council set the members of the Right strongly against him.

He had taken the component elements of his cabinet from all parties capable of supplying good administrators, but he had assigned the three chief portfolios to Republicans, namely M. Jules Favre, M. Ernest Picard, and M. Jules Simon. This was equivalent to announcing his resolution to make a fair trial of Republican government. In thus acting, he gave proof of the soundness of his views. Any preference shown to another form of government, be it what it might, would instantly have thrown France into a state of anarchy. At the first set off the Monarchical opposition endured without outcry this introduction of the Republican element into the cabinet, because it felt that in presence of the many Republicans still in office and of the agitated condition of the larger towns, the transition must be conducted with care; but it did not even wait for the fall of the Commune before it began the contest. From the month of April, the Right in the Assembly, while not ceasing to applaud M. Thiers himself, harassed his principal ministers. The first point of attack was M. Ernest Picard. He was a Republican, no doubt, but a Republican who had given as many pledges to the principal conservatives as to the Republic. As Finance Minister under the Government of Defence he had rendered immense services, which men of business could not have forgotten so soon.

Since then he had, like all his colleagues in the cabinet, struggled with indomitable energy against the Paris Commune. During the struggle itself he had, with the help of M. Calmon, a first-rate administrator, who held perfect community of views with himself and M. Thiers, carried out the reorganization of the departmental and communal administration. To understand rightly how arduous had been the task, it must be remembered that the acting functionaries were all Republicans, but Republicans of a very pronounced type; that they had been nominated by M. Gambetta, that many of them had shown great courage during the war, which made it very difficult to rescind their appointments, and that on the other hand the reactionary deputies came up full of inveterate grudges, and with a fixed determination to find places for their own protégés. M. Ernest Picard had not a numerous staff of experienced administrators at his disposal; the Government was obliged, like all new powers, to make trial of its men in positions which in well-ordered times would only be reached through the training given by subordinate positions. Nevertheless, the prefectoral body which he improvised in the midst of all these tragical events re-established order and gave public confidence a fresh start. As the reward of these services, the Right

demanded the retirement of M. Ernest Picard. He left the ministry at the end of May, 1871, having been M. Thiers' colleague for only three months.

M. Jules Favre retained his post of Minister of Foreign Affairs until the 2nd of August in the same year. He had wished to retire with M. Picard, and only remained in deference to M. Thiers' pressing solicitations, and because he himself perceived the necessity of continuing the negotiations in which he had taken so great a part. The definitive treaty of peace having been concluded on the 10th of May, he still had to attend to a number of conventions which necessarily arose out of it.

These arrangements once made, he refused to remain. Only M. Jules Simon was left, of the former members of opposition in the Corps Législatif, and of the former ministers of the Government of Defence. He did not leave the Cabinet till the 16th of May, 1873, eight days before the fall of M. Thiers' government. The Right made several attempts to overthrow him by means of interpellations, but he had the good fortune to hold his own against his adversaries and to win a majority every time. He was attacked in another way by M. Thiers being frequently requested to separate himself from him, and by perpetual and unfair war

being made upon him through the press. This warfare against the Republican ministers had a meaning which everybody understood, and no one better than M. Thiers. He made the most persevering efforts to retain M. Jules Favre; he kept M. Jules Simon to the last, but at every change in the Cabinet he was obliged to replace the outgoing minister by a minister of less advanced opinions. It seemed as though the Cabinet advanced towards the Right, whilst the President moved towards the Left; and the Left showed its political good sense by comprehending the situation and not bargaining over its support.

That which M. Thiers had been able to do at Bordeaux in a transition time, became much more difficult when the parties had measured one another's strength in the assembly. The Right certainly had the majority, and it remained with the Right even after the elections of the 2nd July, which strengthened the Republicans and gave them the means to maintain the fight. Strictly speaking, the President had the right to take ministers from the minority, by invoking the authority of the pact of Bordeaux; he was not bound to conform strictly, as in settled times, to the principles of parliamentary government; but, besides the fact that he was frequently obliged to have recourse to those principles, he knew the fragility of this

truce of parties over which he had presided; he was only able to maintain it at the cost of the most persevering and skilful efforts. He was so anxious to avoid crises in order to restore a little confidence to the country, a fresh impetus to labour; he saw so clearly the demands and susceptibilities of the monarchical parties, that he employed the greatest reserve, not only in the choice of ministers, but also in that of all the agents of the administration. Even at Bordeaux, when M. Jules Simon persisted in his refusal to form part of the first ministry, he addressed to him these significant words:—"If you refuse, I shall be obliged to take a minister of public instruction from the ranks of the Right." One of his great merits was a sound and prompt estimate of situations. He knew how to resist, and even, as he proved more than once, how to dissolve; but this he would only do in case of need, on great occasions, and when he was obliged to choose between two dangers.

M. Ernest Picard having left office at the end of May, 1871, his retirement gave opportunity for the entrance of M. Victor Lefranc into the Cabinet. Both the ex-minister and the newly-appointed one were conservative and liberal Republicans; but M. Victor Lefranc only received the portfolio of Commerce; that of the Interior

was given to M. Lambrecht. It was, to all appearance at least, a great victory for the Right. The substitution of General Cissey for General Le Flô, which took place at the same time, had no political character.

M. Jules Favre resigned on the 22nd July. He was replaced on the 2nd August by M. de Rémusat. Those who were intimately acquainted with the new minister were aware that the Republic, if it only behaved wisely, would find in him a defender; but for the general public and for the Chamber, to exchange M. Jules Favre for M. de Rémusat was to diminish the influence and the chances of the Republican party. Such men as M. de Rémusat, M. Casimir Perier, M. Thiers himself, who came over to the Republic by force of comparison, perceiving first that it was possible, then that it alone was possible, will have contributed to its establishment at least as much as the Republicans of yesterday, for it is in their train, by their example, under their auspices, that so many men of importance, on account of their past, their fortune, or their character, have joined us, and form now, side by side with our former chiefs, the strength and intelligence of the party. But in 1871 this movement towards Republican principles had scarcely begun to be felt; M. Thiers could not then have

sent his celebrated Message of 1872; and M. de Rémusat, while he brought a reinforcement of strength into the cabinet through his reputation as a great thinker and a great citizen, brought none, or seemed to bring none, to the Republic.

It was the same with M. Casimir Perier when he joined the ministry on the 11th of October, after the death of M. Lambrecht. It was clear at once what he wished, for he was frank and firm, incapable of dissimulation or of submission. On the very first day he said to M. Jules Simon, who still recalls it with emotion, "I am on your side." This simple word was more trustworthy, coming from him, than many vows. But he did no more than pass through the ministry. He wanted to bring the assembly back to Paris; he openly gave his adhesion to M. Duchâtel's proposition which was rejected, and upon this check, though in no way personal to himself, he retired, having perhaps an exaggerated sense of the action of ministerial responsibility. Neither the representations nor the entreaties of his colleagues could retain him. M. Thiers, to whom his presence in the council and that of M. de Rémusat was an immense comfort, even shed tears over it. M. Casimir Perier joined on the 11th of October, 1871, and retired on the 6th of February of the following year. M. Victor Lefranc took the portfolio of

the Interior, and was replaced as Minister of Commerce by M. de Goulard.

M. de Goulard did not remain long in that office. On the 5th March, 1872, M. Pouyer-Quertier was obliged to leave the Cabinet, in consequence of an opinion put forth by him concerning the transference of funds in the action brought against M. Janvier de la Motte, an opinion not shared in by his colleagues. M. Thiers entrusted M. de Goulard, who had been in the ministry for a month only, with the temporary charge of the Finances. On the 21st of April he definitively handed over to him this important portfolio. M. de Goulard had various and great merits, which very strong political disagreements ought not to prevent us from acknowledging. Among other good qualities he had above all those of a first-rate clerk, and these it is which M. Thiers especially prized in him. It is under M. de Goulard's administration that the loan of the three milliards was concluded.

M. Teisserenc de Bort succeeded him at the board of trade. M. Teisserenc de Bort, who had attracted the attention of M. Thiers by a very remarkable speech against the income-tax, was of too thoughtful, too enlightened, too liberal a spirit not to follow M. Thiers in his advance upward towards the Republic. But at this date, the 22nd

April, 1872, he was still a member of the Liberal Right-Centre in the Chamber. M. Thiers took him from among the party to which M. de Goulard belonged.

A few months afterwards (on the 30th November), M. de Goulard acquired considerable importance in the Cabinet by exchanging the Finance portfolio for that of the Interior. M. Victor Lefranc was overthrown by a vote of the Chamber for not having used severe measures against the municipal councils which addressed collective felicitations and votes of confidence to M. Thiers. It was very difficult to suppose, in spite of the assertions of the Right, and of M. Prax Pâris, a Bonapartist, who was their spokesman on this occasion, that a vote founded on such grounds was aimed only at the minister. One of the chief movers in it had even said, "We shall eat the artichoke leaf by leaf." Not only did M. Thiers consent to the retirement of M. Victor Lefranc under these conditions, painful as it was to him, but he called in M. de Goulard to take his place. The choice which he made at the same time of M. Léon Say for Finances would have been some compensation, but for the overwhelming importance of the Ministry of the Interior at a moment when the conflict with the Assembly drew more and more to a head. M. Léon Say, who had

managed the Department of the Seine under very difficult circumstances with much talent, firmness, and success, was one of the most decided members of the Left-Centre; but the Ministry of the Interior, in the hands of M. de Goulard, belonged henceforth to the Right. M. de Broglie affected to call him "Our Minister."

M. de Larcy, actuated no doubt by his private friendship for M. Thiers, had remained in a Government with which his political friends, after a long series of covert attacks, were at length in open conflict. He retired on the 7th December, and was replaced by M. de Fourtou. Many members of the Left, already hurt and irritated by the presence of M. de Goulard at the Ministry of the Interior, objected to the new minister. Ever since M. Thiers had pronounced himself for a Republican Government, the Left had supported him with disinterestedness and perseverance. It had no longer more than a single representative in the Cabinet; it asked for no other portfolio, it consented to be kept in the background, provided that the Republic was formed. It had confidence in M. Thiers personally, and it held with reason that very few affairs went on in which he had not a hand. But selections such as those of M. de Goulard and M. de Fourtou caused such surprise and discontent in its ranks, that it could no longer

hold its peace. M. Jules Simon spoke of it to the President of the Republic. "Your friends," replied M. Thiers, "imagine that I am no judge of men because I make nominations displeasing to them; but it is they who are no judges of political situations. I cannot do without the vote of the majority. It gives me its vote, although outwardly it is hostile to me. One does not obtain such results without some skilful manœuvring. I make advances to it which do not compromise me, because I remain master of everything. We shall see what we shall do after the voting of the constitution. Meanwhile I am not a constitutional king who 'reigns but does not govern.' You understand me?" he added, laughing heartily. "But for all that," said M. Jules Simon, "you irritate the Left without pacifying the Right." "It is possible that I may not pacify it, but I avoid exciting it. I furnish it with no pretext. That is my position towards it." "The thing which astonishes me most in your Cabinet," replied M. Jules Simon, laughing also, "is to see myself there."

It is very true that M. Thiers had a hand in everything. It was a curious spectacle to see how he occupied himself with the smallest details, without getting confused and alway preserving his mind free for important and combined matters. Very circumstantial details have been published of

two so-called councils which met at his house: one composed of the permanent secretaries of the ministries, which met in the early morning hours; the other a council of the Ministers, which was held every day at eleven o'clock, with the exception of Sunday. In all this there is truth as well as falsehood, more falsehood than truth. The only council was the council of Ministers; but without holding any other council or any regular and collective convocation, the president's morning was well filled. He received the finance directors, generals, superintendents, a few men in whom he had special confidence, such as General Valazé and Admiral Krantz; he liked to know the ministers' affairs before they knew them themselves, which was not always to their liking. He also saw spies (*des gens de police*) to the great distress of his friends, who thought it beneath him. He laughed at it. "It is with blackguards of that sort that you pull honest men out of the ditch." All despatches passed through his hands. He wished to know minute by minute, the state of France, and of Europe, all our relations with the Chancellor of the Empire, as well as with the least of the generals of the army of occupation. While M. Jules Favre was Minister for Foreign Affairs, he kept him in his own house, in order to get the news earlier. He afterwards had a part of the

main building of the Prefecture arranged for M. de Rémusat. Every day he had conferences with the Minister of the Interior and the Finance Minister. He made the Governor of the Bank and the great financiers come to him. He occupied himself minutely with all the details of army administration, armament, equipment, food, and lodging. The Paris army did not make a single movement without his orders. He was to be seen every day at the outposts. He concerned himself about the customs tariffs; this was one of his greatest passions. Only two ministries were exempted from his surveillance:—the Ministry of Justice, because it did not do to meddle with M. Dufaure; and that of Public Instruction and Religion, because on these two points he relied on the prudence and competence of the Minister. He did not always agree with M. Dufaure and M. Jules Simon. More than once he asked M. Dufaure for modifications in his staff, without obtaining them. Neither did he care about compulsory education, nor the increase in expenditure for the educational bodies. But all disagreement was limited to an objection made from time to time; he always gave in with a good will, cheerfully. Who had a better right than he to interfere in matters concerning science or literature? But he wished it to be understood that he felt quite secure on

this head. He quietly handed over to the Minister all the adverse letters that he received, which amounted to a good-sized packet daily. His mind was absorbed in his triple contest with the Commune, the German Chancellery, and the Assembly. There was enough there to fill three existences. He managed to do everything, thanks to his strength of will and the extreme lucidity of his mind. He seemed to give himself up entirely to the matter in hand and the person present. Many people who do not do the twentieth part of his work have a busy and preoccupied air which he never had. He was not only master of his intellect, but of his temper. Not that he restrained himself when he was irritated, or that he gave himself much trouble about it. If he was hurt, or even annoyed, he let it be seen without hesitation. But he was not of a melancholic temperament. He was cheerful in the midst of the greatest crisis. He caught a happy or jesting phrase on the wing. He was not even afraid of rather a doubtful joke. His was a serious and persistent base with a surface which was always in motion. He would not have been able to get through his crushing work without this natural cheerfulness, which came to him without effort and restored him to peace and strength.

It was sometimes strange to see his Ministers

gloomy and oppressed with work, while the President who carried everybody's burdens, was easy and cheerful. He declared himself satisfied with his colleagues, amongst whom we must reckon as in the first rank, the most devoted, the most indefatigable of all, M. Barthélemy de Saint-Hilaire. The more they were attacked the more he became attached to them. He loved M. Jules Favre tenderly, appreciating more than any one his great talent and his great heart. He did everything in his power to retain him. It was a real grief to him to lose M. Casimir Perier. One day when M. Jules Simon left the council to go and answer some interpellation from Monseigneur Dupanloup or M. Johnston, he followed him out to the staircase to say, "Defend yourself, that you may remain." The Minister on arriving at the Chamber found a little note which had been sent by a messenger, "Do not defend yourself for your own satisfaction, or to avenge yourself; defend yourself that you may remain." Whether one were still in his Cabinet or had left it, one was sure to be defended by him on all occasions. He was really an extraordinary man, as noble and endearing in private as he was in public. He knew himself. He believed, with good reason, that none but he could crush the insurrection, carry on the diplomatic contest with

the conqueror without losing, and fish, so to speak, a majority out of the discordant elements which composed the Assembly. He said frankly to the Chamber, "You only are sovereign, I am your delegate. You can take away the authority you have given me. I have neither the power nor the wish to act except with your concurrence, and rendering an account to you of everything." These phrases only signified, "I am ready to go, when you wish;" but not, "I am disposed to let myself be led." At the commencement the Right did not wish him to go, but wished to lead him; but when the insurrection was quelled, and peace was established, seeing clearly that he would not put himself at the head of a reactionary party in order to open a campaign against the Republic, they resolved to get rid of M. Thiers. This is a hard judgment to pronounce upon the majority who accomplished the "24 May." It is, however, just.

We have seen that even during the Commune they tried to oust M. Picard from office. They wished to have one of their own party as Minister of the Interior, and they insisted on M. Lambrecht. Having got him, they were only half satisfied with him. That honest man was no observer of rank or persons. It is worthy of remark that if the Right had understood their

position they would have seen that in reality they found fault with him for being more Right than themselves. They were at that time in all the fever of decentralization, and M. Lambrecht defended the Government, and the theory of centralization which he shared with M. Thiers, against them.

This great love of decentralizing, which was not so very sincere, for we find no trace of it after 24th May, 1873, was a cloak for the secret desire to oppose M. Thiers, who was beginning to be an object of suspicion. Two months before M. Lambrecht's appointment to the Ministry of the Interior, the Right had difficulty in hiding their suspicions. They restrained themselves in public; at least the important members and chiefs did so. They only said sententiously in the lobbies and at their private meetings in speaking of M. Thiers, "He is a prisoner of the Left." The prisoner of a party! This was a reproach that might have been spared him. Never man said more decidedly to all parties what he believed to be the truth.

What were the motives of this growing disaffection on the part of the Right? Their number is many. New ones cropped up every day. We will limit ourselves to pointing out the chief. That the Government had not opened fire on Paris on 19th March, was their first grievance.

According to the Right, it ought to have struck a great blow, a decisive blow, and at once. The insurrection would have been crushed before it had time to burst forth if the Government had acted on the first symptoms of disorder. Like all who are ignorant, the Right saw what was desirable, without taking into account what was possible. They counted up soldiers and even exaggerated their numbers; but they did not take into account their physical and moral condition. To have looked at them would have been enough, but anger does not reason. Again, M. Thiers, who knew the strength of the insurrection, who measured his own strength, who was fully alive to the perils of a civil war during the occupation and the negotiations with Germany, moved besides by feelings of humanity and justice, promised their life to such of the insurgents as were not charged with concerted crimes, and who had not been the authors or chiefs of the insurrection; the Right were in favour of a pitiless repression. That he received deputations from large towns, seemed to the members of the extreme Right to be culpable connivance, and almost treason against the rural populations. He did not cease to affirm that the Republican form of governmant was in no danger, and that it should never perish in his hands; and this affirmation,

which was besides quite sincere, was the sole means of preventing an insurrection in the provinces, and arresting the progress of that of Paris. "But," said the Right, "there is no Republic, there is only the Pact of Bordeaux till we have the constitution, and after the constitution there can only be a Monarchy." During the whole course of the insurrection the Right was very courageous, very decided, very inflexible as to its principles; but aggressive, short-sighted, and pitiless.

This contrast was striking, especially at a distance; as it will also be in history. M. de Rémusat, some time after his entry into the Cabinet, wrote from Toulouse to M. Jules Simon, "You may conceive with what anxiety I follow all the phases of a situation which has no parallel in history. My consolation is in the excellent conduct of my friends. I have at least the happiness of seeing them act most honourably in the Cabinet. I agree with the ideas of the Government as much as I disapprove of the Assembly."

The Assembly demanded that each day an account should be rendered at the tribune of all that took place in Paris, or in the army; it wished to be informed beforehand of all that the Government intended to do. Not being able to compel M. Thiers to publicly expose his plans and certain

details of the situation, it appointed a committee of fifteen of its members to confer with the Government. Several members of the committee persuaded themselves that they were introduced into the Cabinet by the Chamber. The committee was not content with knowing; it wanted to control. It obliged M. Thiers to hold continual conferences. "We ought to meet every day. If you cannot come to the committee, the committee will come to the Hôtel de la Préfecture." Had it not been for the good sense of M. Jules de Lasteyrie and some others, this committee would have taken the direction of the army, and transformed the most reactionary of Assemblies into a sort of National Convention.

We can remember the night sitting of 24th March, of which we have given an account. The day before, the mayors of Paris had appeared at the tribune with their sashes, amid loud protestations from the Right. M. Arnaud (of Ariége), a deputy and mayor of Paris, had read, not without difficulty, a motion for a municipal law, for which urgency had been voted. This motion was to be discussed the next day, the 24th. The committee were not prepared for the day sitting; the debate was postponed to a night sitting. It was during the deliberations of the committee that the famous proclamation of Admiral Saisset, promising

immediate municipal elections, and the election of the General of the National Guard, was made known in the lobbies of the Assembly. This proclamation excited indescribable anger in the Right, not against the admiral, but against M. Thiers; as if it were possible that M. Thiers should ever have promised to allow a Commander in Chief of the National Guard to be elected. We have said that under the influence of this news some of the leaders held a meeting in a bureau, and resolved to offer the dictatorship to the Prince de Joinville. This fact has since been denied; but it is certain that it was affirmed on all sides, in the lobbies and in the lecture-room. We do not say that there was even an attempt to put it into execution, or that the prince was spoken to on the subject. We are persuaded on the one hand that if overtures had been made to him, he would have rejected them, and on the other that had the proposal been brought forward in a meeting of the Right it would not have met with a good reception. But even if the rumour of the plot had only been one of those rumours which have no foundation in fact, it was public, persistent; it disturbed the Government and a part of the Assembly. It proves that the idea of overthrowing M. Thiers was not an improbable hypothesis. It was daily more evident that although he was in

harmony with the Right of the Assembly as well as the Left, and all that was honest and sensible in France, on the necessity of quelling the insurrection, there were very serious disagreements as to the method of doing that, and the position to be taken up with regard to the insurgents in Paris.

This disagreement, which came out at each sitting, was particularly marked in the debate on 27th April.

M. Thiers, at the tribune, gave explanations of what had occurred in Paris. He was led on to speak of his feelings when he was obliged to give the order to fire on Frenchmen. His words were received by the Right with murmurs.

M. Thiers.—"But, gentlemen, let me speak. . . . If in any part—I say it quite frankly—if in any part of this Assembly there be a party of my colleagues so ill-disposed towards me as not to allow me to finish the expression of my thoughts, let them declare themselves: I do not wish to retain the post I now hold, except with the confidence of my colleagues, and their entire confidence." (*Cheers.*) M. Thiers went on.

"If in any part whatever of this Assembly there be men who possess the confidence of the country more fully than I, let them explain themselves!"

M. Léon de Maleville.—"Yes. If they think they possess the confidence of the country, let them explain themselves."

M. Thiers.—"If I should be fortunate enough to find such persons, so trusted by the country, here, no one would more willingly resign power than I. Yes, let them merit and justify such confidence, and I shall be very thankful to have a successor."

M. Paris.—"Our confidence in you has never wavered."

M. Thiers.—"Well then, if confidence is not wanting, let me have silence that I may completely explain my thoughts; and when I express my grief, which should be shared by you also (*yes, yes,*) let me point out to you the cause, and give you the answer to the questions I put to myself sometimes. (*Speak! speak!*).

"What! Can you believe that, in virtue of the title you have given me, I preside at a civil war without fear and without pain?"

M. de Kerdrel mounted the tribune after M. Thiers, in order to explain, he said, some misunderstanding. M. Thiers had said that the insurgents in Paris were few, and that our soldiers were well disposed and well commanded. "If the number of the insurgents was so small," said M. de Kerdrel, "and if the soldiers were so valorous

and so well commanded as was said, these soldiers, who were in want of nothing, neither ammunition, nor artillery, nor anything else, would not have remained so long before Paris." . . . M. Thiers had also said that the Parisian insurrection was an isolated fact. "No," said M. de Kerdrel, "it is not an isolated fact. From the provinces there come grievous echoes, criminal echoes, of evil passions in a state of ferment."

The true grievance is in the last words of the orator.

"M. Thiers has said that you did not conspire against the Republic . . .

"No, gentlemen, you will never conspire against any government, but neither will you conspire against the will of the country.

"It must not be believed that Paris is the guardian of the only form of government, and that it is necessary for us to say to Paris, We do not wish to take from you that which you possess!

"We shall know how to wait until the day when the country shall wish us to explain its thought; but, gentlemen, just as we do not wish to precipitate solutions, we must equally abstain from putting burning questions, questions which divide a country which is in the melancholy state of ours at present. It would be equally unfortunate to

allow it to believe that we are in absolute doubt as to the institutions which would be best for it, and to admit that none of us have any fixed convictions on this point . . .

"It is because I respect universal suffrage that I do not think it well that we should repeat too often that we are here to organize and not to constitute.

"We must organize first, strengthen society, and the State . . . ; but one day, be sure, the edifice will be completed."

A prolonged uproar followed this speech.

Scenes of this nature were of almost daily occurrence. On 21st May, M. Thiers lost all patience under an attack from M. Mortimer Ternaux. One of the principal grievances against the President was his reception of deputations from the towns, of delegates from the *Union des Droits* of Paris, and, in general, of all those who came on an errand of conciliation. He received them like a man who would have no compromise on matters of principle, but who was determined to neglect no lawful means of preventing civil war. He never entertained the idea of a compromise; he always said, that the instigators and authors of the insurrection were criminals; that he would bring before the courts, not only the chiefs, but any of their accomplices,

who had been guilty of an offence or crime against the common law; but he appealed for clemency towards those who had been led astray, and to such as were in want he promised to continue their wages until the workshops were reopened. After these interviews, the delegates never failed to publish accounts in which his promises were exaggerated and his threats suppressed. The very character they had accepted explained this subterfuge, which, however, was not always voluntary. The press added their own commentaries to these accounts, and thus made confusion worse confounded. M. Thiers did his best to minimise the evil, by multiplying the most precise statements, either in the *Journal Officiel* or in the *bulletins*, which he published almost daily, or in the Chamber; but these declarations did not disarm the Right, which ought, had it possessed the tact of the situation, to have welcomed and circulated them. A former friend of M. Thiers, an ardent reactionary, M. Mortimer Ternaux, who till then had played no part in the Assembly, had tried to read from the tribune an article in the *Gaulois* containing the account of a conversation of M. Thiers with several delegates of the *Union des Droits de Paris*. The Assembly on that day was in no mood to listen to him. He returned to the charge the next day, 11th May, the day on

which the definitive treaty of peace with Prussia was communicated to the assembly. The Government, by the bye, in this sitting alone had had an interpellation from M. Anisson-Duperron on the recent nominations of subprefects, a notice by General Ducrot of an interpellation on the elections of the Nièvre, and a question by M. de Belcastel on the manner in which the government intended to apply the penal law to the insurgents so soon as it should be master of Paris. We see how the Right helped M. Thiers and his ministers in their labours. M. Mortimer Ternaux eagerly seized the opportunity, thus, as it were, offered to him.

M. Mortimer Ternaux.—"Some persons in this Assembly have blamed me for having brought into the tribune a document which was signed by the syndicate of the Parisian associations." (*No! no!*)

M de Belcastel.—"Not at all, you were quite right."

M. Mortimer Ternaux.—"Very well, if I was right, here is another (*laughter*). . . . much more important on account of the signatures affixed to it."

This was an account of a conversation which had taken place a few days before between M. Thiers, and MM. Emile Fourcaud and Simiat, delegates of the town of Bordeaux.

Several members of the Right.—"Read! read!"

Different voices.—"No! no. Enough of irritating discussions!—Question! question!"

M. Mortimer Ternaux.—"In the first paragraph the sentiments which M. Thiers expressed on different points are set forth; then in a subsequent paragraph,—the only one which I am going to read to you—they add, speaking in the name of M. Thiers, for it is M. Thiers who is supposed to be speaking,—

M. Thiers.—"M. Thiers ought to be allowed to speak for himself!"

From a great many benches.—"Bravo! bravo! very good."

M. Mortimer Ternaux.—"I beg your pardon, but it is not I who put words into your mouth, it is the document."

M. Thiers.—"I wish to speak."

M. Du Favre.—"M. Mortimer Ternaux, you are playing a dangerous part."

M. Jules Simon.—"You may do much harm to your country."

M. Mortimer Ternaux.—"In any case I am acting in good faith.

"Here is the paragraph I wish to read to the chamber:—

"'If the insurgents would cease hostilities, the gates would be left open, during one week, except

for the assassins of the Generals Clément Thomas and Lecomte.'

"Now by excepting only the assassins of the Generals Clément Thomas and Lecomte, and opening the gates to everybody, a promise is evidently given which ought not to be fulfilled."

M. Aclocque.—"The gates would be opened for the insurgents and closed for the law."

From different benches.—"That promise has not been given."

M. Mortimer Ternaux.—"I do not say it has; what I say is, that it is published in a document bearing three signatures, and most important ones too, since the very first is that of the mayor of Bordeaux."

Cheers on some of the Right benches, murmurs on the Left.

M. Thiers (amid deep silence).—"I ask the Assembly to excuse the emotion I feel, which it will understand when it knows that, consecrating my life, day and night, to the service of my country with a disinterestedness which I believe is proven;—"

From a great number of benches.—"Yes, yes, and every one is grateful to you for it."

M. Thiers.—"Exposed to every danger, I now encounter, pardon the word, such trickery."

(*Murmurs and objections on the Right benches, applause from the Left and the Centre.*)

M. Mortimer Ternaux.—"I protest against the expression just now employed by M. Thiers."

M. Thiers.—"I am in the right, I maintain it, I am in the right." (*Renewed applause from the same benches.*)

M. le Comte de Maillé.—"The repeated applause from this side" (*pointing towards the Left*) "proves that this is no trickery." (*Applause from some of the Right benches.*)

M. Thiers.—"I maintain the word!" (*Murmurs from the Right, renewed applause from the Left, and from several benches in other parts of the Assembly.*) "Yes, gentlemen, when, foreseeing ingratitude, not doubting that I must meet with it, I devote my life to the public service, you ought at least not to weaken me.

"Well then, let all those who are of this opinion rise and declare themselves; let the Assembly decide. I cannot govern upon such conditions."

From several benches.—"Quite right, quite right. That is true."

M. Jules Simon.—"And we know it well!"

M. de Juigné.—"You are not in any way attacked, M. Thiers!"

M. Thiers.—"I demand of the Assembly that it pass a vote of confidence on this subject."

From some of the Left benches.—"Hear! hear!"

M. Thiers.—"My resignation is ready." (*Uproar.*)

A voice from the Right.—"Lay it down!"

It need hardly be said, that the vote demanded by M. Thiers was passed by an immense majority (490 against 9, and 104 abstentions.) But this is how M. Thiers was supported by a portion of the Right in that terrible conflict which at that period he had to sustain. M. Bertauld ascended the tribune before the close of this episode, and read a decree issued by the Commune the day before (the 10th May, 1871,) and the execution of which had commenced in Paris whilst M. Ternaux was still in the tribune. It runs as follows:—

"Article 1. The personal estate of M. Thiers shall be seized by the Administration of National Property."

"Article 2. The house of M. Thiers, situated in the Place Georges, shall be razed to the ground."

It may seem surprising that during this same month, in 1871, the proposition of conferring a quinquennial presidency on M. Thiers should have been discussed in the meetings of the Right. This idea was started by a few members of the Left Centre, but it found partisans among the Right, and even among members who talked openly of

the increasing distrust with which M. Thiers inspired them. It made so much way that M. Thiers seriously discussed the matter with his most intimate counsellors. There is no doubt that the proposition would have been voted by a very large majority. M. Thiers, who not only was disinterested, but took a pride in being so, said to all those who pressed him on the subject, "I want nothing for myself." He held by his own desire an exhaustive conversation on this subject with two friends in whom he had long placed absolute confidence. He concluded it by these words, which explain the conduct of certain members of the Right, those who wished not to overthrow but to lead him: "I want nothing for myself," he said to these two friends. "I will only accept duties. When the Constitution has been drawn up, the attributes of the President will be clearly determined. At present I only possess my freedom of action on condition of being able to offer my resignation."

The inventors of the quinquennial Presidency did not give up their project, which was modified little by little until it became, three months later, the germ of the Rivet proposition.

After the entrance of the troops into Paris, the Assembly passed a vote that M. Thiers and the army had both deserved well of the country. This was a day of triumph for M. Thiers.

It was also a day of triumph for him, for our army, for France, and for the cause of order in Europe, when, accompanied by the Assembly, he solemnly passed in review the army which had just given such glorious proof of its resuscitation. But he did not cease to meet, on the Right of the Assembly, with those "trickeries" of which he had complained with so much spirit on the 11th May. We might give innumerable proofs of this fact, by public as well as private instances. Delegates from the *Réunion des Réservoirs* were to be met almost daily on the Place d'Armes, on their way to demand of M. Thiers the dismissal of one of his ministers, or an explanation of one of his acts. We shall only mention here what occurred in the public sittings, and of these we shall recall only the most memorable circumstances.

On the 24th August, 1871, the consequences of the insurrection were still under discussion. M. de Meaux demanded the immediate disbanding of the whole of the National Guard. He brought an accusation against certain National Guards whom the Government had not yet, he said, disbanded; there was the National Guard of Lyons, who had permitted one of their chiefs to be assassinated, and had let the red flag float for six months over the mairie; and the National Guard of Saint-Etienne which had neither de-

fended nor avenged the Prefect of the Loire (M. de l'Espée).

M. de Meaux.—"But in calling attention to these facts, which I believe to be incontestable, is it my intention to accuse the Government?"

M. Thiers.—"Accuse it!"

M. de Meaux.—"No; our duty is to warn, not to accuse, when we wish to maintain."

M. Thiers.—"Accuse it! accuse it! it would be more frank."

M. Thiers in his reply did not deny the necessity of disbanding the National Guard. Everybody in the Assembly knew that compulsory service was to be organized in conjunction with a system of reserve and territorial forces, which could not be reconciled with the existence of the National Guard. "I do not object to their being disbanded," said M. Thiers, "I object to their being disbanded at once. I wish to retain the power of disbanding them at my own time, and in proportion as the army is reorganized." He showed that the exaggerated reports of the orators of the Right were serving no purpose but that of alarming the country.

"I have a patriotic duty to fulfil. There is, I announce it with all publicity, a system of alarms —unintentional, I admit, on the part of many of those who make themselves its involuntary

agents,—perfidiously planned and carried out—I hasten to add, beyond these walls—by all those parties who are enemies of France and of the present order of things."

From the Left.—"True! true!" (*Murmurs from the Right.*)

M. Thiers.—"They are trying to alarm the country; many honest men do so, I am aware, with the utmost sincerity, they alarm the country because they are alarmed themselves . . ."

Several members on the Right.—"One may well be alarmed."

M. Thiers.—"But in alarming the country they do the greatest amount of harm that can possibly be done to it; they disturb its industry, they destroy its credit, and credit is now our only resource. They furnish pretexts to the foreigner who occupies our soil.

"I affirm that material order is not in danger . . . . (*Signs of approval on the Left; clamour on the Right.*) I affirm it . . . . (*Renewed clamour on the Right.*) . . . . It is not they who interrupt me who answer for it; it is I who answer for it with my head and with my honour. I answer for it before France, before history, that material order is not in danger." (*Applause on the Left.*)

And on their interrupting him again from the Right,—

"Gentlemen," he said, "your resolution and mine are separated by so short an interval that we certainly ought to grant one another time to explain ourselves."

Insisting anew on material order, "I say," he repeated with energy, "that disorder cannot arise again in France at this moment. It is well that the country should know, it is well that all those should know who now think only of working, of enriching the land with the sweat of their brow, and of helping the Government to pay the ransom of the country,—that their work shall not be disturbed, and that the nightly repose of which they stand in need to relieve them after the toils of the day, is assured to them. (*Applause on the Left.*)

"As for the moral disorder, do you know what is the cause of it, in my opinion, perhaps in yours? In my opinion it is caused by our divisions. (*Hear! hear! on the Left; murmurs on the Right.*)

"I do not say enough when I say our divisions. Divisions are natural in a free country. The cause of moral disorder lies in this, that our divisions are unexampled in any nation; it lies in our passions. (*Sensation.*)

"Well, as for me, here is my policy in two words. I have no other care, I have no other work from morning to night, but to try and prevent the different parties from attacking one

another." (*Murmurs on the Right; applause on the Left.*)

The interruptions became more and more frequent, and the noise of conversation almost drowned the speaker's voice.

"If I were a weak man," he cried, "I should be your flatterer. Instead of that, when I think you are mistaken, I regard it as a duty to tell you so. (*Uproar.*)

"If you will not be told, that is your affair. So, when the Government which you have appointed thinks you are mistaken, you will not even listen to it. (*No! no!*) I am not offended.

"But from the number of voices which are raised against my words in this Assembly, I think that the confidence which I require is much shaken . . . ."

Several voices.—"Not so! not so! do not think it!"

M. Thiers.—"As for me, when I wear out my life in the service of my country, I have a right to be rewarded by a little attention and, I venture to add, by a good deal of esteem. (*Agitation.*)

"Now, I repeat, I believe this confidence to be shaken."

From several benches.—"No! no! not at all!"

M. Ducuing.—"Do not give an advantage to your adversaries by believing it."

M. Thiers.—"I will only add one word: I know what the present scene demands of me, I have nothing more to say to the Assembly!" (*Uproar. Loud applause from the Left; murmurs and sudden agitation on the other benches. Almost all the Representatives are on their feet. Some leave their places, others collect in groups. The greatest excitement prevails in all parts of the hall.*)

On the 28th August, 1871, four days after this sitting, which might have led to such fatal consequences, M. Vitet read from the tribune his report on the Rivet proposition. Briefly, M. Rivet and the cosignatories of this proposition had for their object, first, the conferring on M. Thiers of the title of President of the Republic, and, secondly, the securing to him the possession of power for the space of three years. Nine bureaux out of fifteen had appointed hostile delegates. It was to be expected therefore that the committee would propose its rejection. On the contrary, it was the adoption of the project that it proposed, but of the project very considerably modified. The Left was especially struck with the preambles placed before the articles, and with the terms in which the report was expressed, which, while

advising the adoption, seemed, they said, to prompt the rejection of the proposal. They were astonished and irritated at this contradiction. The contradiction existed, but neither the committee nor their reporter ought to be reproached with it, since both their resolutions and their words very faithfully expressed the state of mind of the majority. The committee gave a fresh confirmation to the Republican form, it conferred a new title on M. Thiers, a new title and an increase of authority and stability, but it did so against its will and because it felt, in spite of itself, that M. Thiers was the indispensable man; it neither attempted to hide its aversion to the Republic, nor its distrust of the President, and it surrounded the concessions which it was obliged to make with all the restrictions and precautions that could be employed to diminish their range. This impression was so evidently the result of M. Vitet's double reading, and was so universally felt, that M. Dufaure immediately mounted the tribune and requested, or rather exacted in the name of the Council of Ministers, the addition of a new preamble containing an expression of admiration and gratitude towards M. Thiers.

The discussion took place the second day afterwards. Several speeches were made against the bill. The most remarkable in all respects,

the cleverest, and the most frank, was that of M. Léonce de Lavergne.

He maintained that it was contrary to all principles of Republican government, and all free constitutional government whatever, to set up at once a sovereign and unique Assembly, indissoluble by the President, and a President nominated for three years, whom the Assembly was unable to dismiss. M. Thiers made a great point of his continuing to be a deputy. "They cannot deprive me," he said, "of the right which I hold from my constituents." He made a still greater point of the right of speaking from the tribune whenever he should wish. "I am an orator, I am not a general. My only power lies in the tribune." The committee agreed to grant him this privilege. "This would be all very well for a minister, because he can be dismissed," said M. de Lavergne, "but how can you allow a President, against whom there is no voting, to take part in the debates?" M. Léonce de Lavergne concluded, and in truth he was not far wrong, that the project of the committee was ill-conceived, full of contradictions, and would lead to impossibilities. He wound up as follows: "At what a time is the proposal made to us to depart to such an extent from all the traditions of a Republican and a free government? We must answer sadly but frankly,

for the situation to which we are brought will not admit of our keeping silence any longer; at a time when, on all questions of government, a profound disagreement has declared itself between the chief of the Executive and the majority of the Assembly . . . . (*Prolonged excitement*).

"We had sought up to the present time to conceal these disagreements in the privacy of our secret deliberations, but now they appear in broad daylight, and the President of the Council has publicly recognized and aggravated them at a recent sitting.

"On the abrogation of the laws of exile, on the departmental law, on military reorganization, on the indemnity to be granted to the invaded departments, on the law for the dissolution of the National Guard, on all the most important financial questions, we have had to sustain a more or less open contest with a Government emanating from ourselves; a new contest is said to be in preparation on the subject of the bill demanded by all the bureaus for the maintenance of the seat of government at Versailles. The Assembly ought to retain more jealously than ever that authority which the country has put into its hands."

It was all very fine for M. de Lavergne to talk of the contradictions of which the Assembly was guilty. Everybody made them in this affair; he

made some himself, since instead of voting against the bill, he confined himself to proposing an amendment which he ended by renouncing; and after all, what was the scheme which granted to M. Thiers the title of President for three years while reserving to the Assembly the right of depriving him of it, but the most formal of contradictions?

The Right had thought fit to declare at the head of the bill that the Chamber was about to make use for the first time of its constituent power, "an essential attribute of the authority with which it is invested." The Left combated this preamble to the uttermost, and undertook to show that the Assembly was simply legislative, and could not take to itself constituent powers without usurpation. But the Left, which declined to be constituent, maintained that the Rivet motion, as soon as it should have been voted, would have the force of a constitutional law; and the Right, which in the preamble so loudly laid claim to the constituent power, declared in debate that it was simply passing an ordinary law, less than that, a mere resolution, essentially revocable, a change of title, nothing more. Both sides of the Chamber invoked principles, but thought only of interests. It is no offence to the Left to say that it would have declared itself constituent if it had had the majority, and

as for the Right, which took such high ground for a simple change of name, if in the first clause of the bill it could have substituted the name of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom for that of President of the Republic, it would immediately have declared that the Republic had been definitely condemned by a constitutional vote.

After a warm discussion, the first clause was passed by 434 votes against 225. The Government had supported it. It was thus worded:—

"The National Assembly, considering that it has the right to make use of the constituent power as being an essential attribute of the sovereignty with which it is invested, and that the imperative duties which it was first of all incumbent on it to undertake, and which are even yet far from being accomplished, have alone hindered it from making use of this power up to the present time."

M. de Lavergne at once withdrew his amendment, because the Assembly, being constituent and consequently sovereign, it could at any time dismiss M. Thiers. This right of dismissal is contained besides in clause three of the bill, which runs thus: "The President of the Republic is responsible to the Assembly." Responsible, in the language of the law, means liable to be dismissed, and M. Vitet had explained this very

clearly in his report. The declaration that the power of the President should be of equal duration with that of the Assembly must be looked upon, he said, "as rather an apparent satisfaction than a real one, since the responsibility of the chief of the State to the Assembly still remained, and that a separation was always possible." We have seen that M. Thiers was a great upholder of this doctrine, and that he looked upon the right of being able to give in his resignation as a source of power for himself.

The preamble relating to M. Thiers, which was demanded by M. Dufaure in the name of the Council of Ministers was thus worded:—

"Taking moreover into consideration the eminent services rendered to the country by M. Thiers during the last six months, and the guarantees represented by the continuance of the powers which he holds from the Assembly . . . ."

M. Fresneau presented himself at the tribune to contest this, but, before the manifest desire of the Assembly, he withdrew without speaking. The result of the voting was as follows: 524 votes for the motion, thirty-six against it, and 136 abstentions.

There still remained a question which M. Thiers had much at heart, and with regard to which he was indeed intractable. Could he inter-

fere, as in time past, in parliamentary debates? The committee proposed to forbid his entrance into Parliament. "But we would ask," said M. Vitet in his report, "if through respect for principles we were to go so far as to propose to France that she shall decree that henceforth her incomparable orator shall open his mouth no more and shall speak only by message, whether France would not be tempted to laugh in our faces; and I will not say what she would think of us." M. de Lavergne proposed that at least the President of the Republic should be obliged to inform the President of the Assembly, by a message, of his intention to take part in the debate. The Chamber did not vote this formality, which was afterwards accepted and aggravated. The committee contented itself with saying, "He shall be heard by the National Assembly as often as he shall think it necessary, after having informed the President of his intention." This somewhat obscure reading was adopted; it did not much hamper the President, nor did it offer any great relief to the Right. The committee would have wished to give rather more solemnity to the words of the President, and to render his intervention less frequent if not more difficult. The whole law was passed by 491 votes against ninety-four.

The vote took place on 31st August; the law

was promulgated on 3rd September. Article 1, after being several times remodelled, was expressed in these terms :—

"The chief of the Executive Power shall take the title of President of the French Republic. He shall continue, under the authority of the National Assembly, and so long as it shall not have concluded its labours, to exercise the functions delegated to him by the decree of the 17th February, 1871."

The Assembly, by using these terms, prevented M. Thiers from surviving it. By the whole drift of the law, and by the report of M. Vitet, it reserved to itself the right of dismissing him. It is easy by these signs to recognize an Assembly which nominates a President of the Republic without accepting the Republic, which, while professing to reward M. Thiers, gives him only a deceptive title and a mockery of stability, and which takes pains to declare that it votes all this in spite of itself, and only "in order not to refuse."

M. Lavergne stated in polite terms "the complaints" of the majority against M. Thiers. When M. de Lorgeril or General Du Temple took up the word, they spoke more bluntly. Here is a speech of M. Du Temple's, which certainly expresses the feelings of a great number of his friends. It was delivered on 12th September, 1871.

"At Bordeaux," said M. Du Temple, "when we saw that the chief of the Executive did not form his ministry from the majority, we said nothing, because there was a treaty to be made; it has been none the better for it. At Versailles, we again said nothing, although the chief of the Executive paid no attention to our opinion, because there was an insurrection, and it has been none the less abominable.

"Must we always be silent? (*Speak! speak!*)

"A month ago I ascended the tribune. I wished to ask why the members of the Commune indicted had not yet been tried, why the Marseilles verdicts had not been executed, why the National Guard, condemned by public opinion before we had condemned it, was not yet disarmed, why the ministry no longer represented the majority of the Assembly.

"What has been done since?

"The Government, they say, has forsworn extra-legal measures. I ask myself, what will it do then? (*Exclamations on the Left.*) Opinion is alarmed.

"I see in France but two parties: on the right hand honest men, and on the left the Commune, its aiders and abettors. Between the two I see no possible mean, any more than between a murderer and a judge of assize.

"I have done. I wanted to show that I was

neither the dupe nor the accomplice of a policy of procrastination and connivance, which, under an apparent calm, allows full growth to every evil passion. Morality and religion are not to be insulted by the press, and by insensate acts and writings, with impunity. Such indulgence will assuredly bear its fruits."

The official report of M. Du Temple's speech merely added "Cheers from a few benches."

Let us briefly answer some of these things. The Ministry, according to M. Du Temple, was not taken from the majority; and yet, at that time the Minister of the Interior was M. Lambrecht, and he had as colleagues in the Cabinet M. de Larcy, M. de Cissey, and M. Pouyer-Quertier.

The disarmament of the National Guard did not proceed fast enough to please the orator of the Right. He forgot that the Government had only pledged itself to disband it gradually, and according to the progress of the reorganization of the army.

Again, M. Du Temple said that the trials of the Communists made no progress. Certainly the fault was not with the Government. Do our readers know the actual number of the prisoners? It was 38,000. They were distributed on men-of-war, and in the fortresses of our ports. A

Minister, M. Jules Simon, accompanied by Admiral Krantz, had just visited all the depôts at Cherbourg, Brest, Lorient and Rochefort. The object of this visit was to ascertain that the laws of humanity were everywhere observed, and that the first revision and classification of the indictments were carried out with the least possible delay. On M. Jules Simon's return, the number of officers engaged in this heavy task was raised to 150.

M. Du Temple further complains that the Government had forbidden extra-legal measures; this reproach, since it is one, was indeed deserved. M. Thiers' first words in the Council had been these:—"No transportation without trial." He had repeated them several times in the tribune, and his own resolution and that of his colleagues had been irrevocably taken on this point. That which M. Du Temple thought impossible was done. The number of Courts-Martial in the first division was increased to twenty-two. There were two Courts of Revision. A certain number of cases were tried by the courts-martial of the other military divisions, and by fourteen courts of assize. The number of condemnations for criminal acts amounted to 9596. Of this number 6501 appealed. M. Du Temple protested against the leniency of the Government. We now know

that nearly all the appeals were granted; but when M. Du Temple delivered his memorable speech, it was far otherwise, and the complaints of the honourable speaker were without motive or pretext. Besides, in any case, the responsibility of the pardons granted did not rest with the President of the Republic. The law of 17th June had enacted that a pardon required two separate consents, that of the President, and that of a commission of fifteen members elected by the Assembly. This commission numbered among its members three only belonging to the Left Centre, MM. Martel, Duchâtel, and Corne. The other twelve members belonged to the Right. Not a pardon, not a single commutation of punishment could be granted without its consent. Would the number of pardons granted have been greater if M. Thiers had been sole master? The ministers and the members of the commission only could tell us, but they will be silent. What is public and certain, and it explains the charges of General Du Temple, is, that from the first day of the insurrection, M. Thiers spoke of relentless repression against the chiefs and the men found guilty of concerted crimes, but that he promised the others indulgence.

M. Du Temple complained of the latitude given to journals which, said he, insulted morality and

religion. "We cannot," retorted M. Lambrecht, "employ weapons which we no longer possess. Do you want to re-enact the decree of 1852? (*No! no!*) Well, we shall not ask for it, and I see that you do not want it any more than we do."

In any case, if the Government was indulgent to the journals which attacked religion, its severity was not excessive towards those journals, friends of M. Du Temple, which attacked the Republic. At that very time, in Marseilles, a town under the state of siege, a journal called *Le Légitimiste* was publishing the following. (M. Rouvier read out the passage from the tribune. The interruptions on the Right are worthy of remark.)

M. Rouvier (reading).—"Do what you will, and say what you will, M. Thiers and accomplices, the Republic, as you understand it, is impossible in France.

"The Commune! that is its true expression."

A Voice on the Right.—"That is true."

M. Rouvier (continuing).—"Before all things, no God, no morality, no family, no property, no law, no justice, no work; but, *per contra*, alcohol unlimited. . . ."

M. Colb-Bernard.—"That is true; that is true."

M. Rouvier (reading).—"This is what the people expect from the good Republic."

II.

Among the acts of courageous firmness which abound in M. Thiers' life, we must reckon the message that he read in person from the tribune, 7th December, 1871. This document, which was the longest of its kind that he had ever written, passed in review, with the clearness and precision which were the special characteristics of M. Thiers, and with rare outspokenness, all the elements of the situation.

He showed, first, that material order was established everywhere. This was not the case with moral order, which was still far from satisfactorily established in the Southern Departments. "Besides," he said, "the country wants, in order to be completely at rest, something which is ever present in all our thoughts, something which the Government cannot give it, something which is in your power, but which perhaps it would not be wise for you to give it precipitately, that is to say, a clearly defined future. For such a benefit we must look

to time, and to God, the sole possessor of time; to God, the sole disposer of events; and we must prepare for it with patience, calmness, and the clear intelligence of modern society." (*General and profound sensation.*)

The President then proceeded to speak of our foreign situation, which was as calm as we could expect after so disastrous a war.

"Our policy is peace," he said, "peace without discouragement and without bravado, with the conviction that reorganized France will always be necessary to Europe, and always capable of fulfilling her duties there to others and herself."

He went into very circumstantial details of the negotiations with Germany, which had anticipated the liberation of six departments. Our manufacturers had protested when the treaty was announced, because for a time it gave facilities to the importation of German products into France; German commerce had not been less affected by the reciprocal entry of French goods. The negotiations had been at one time broken off; finally a basis had been agreed to: a limitation of the quantities of French produce imported into Germany; a diminution of six months on the period during which freedom was granted to goods from Alsace-Lorraine. "Well, gentlemen, we confess it; it was the consideration of liberating

the territory which weighed more than any other consideration with us. (*Quite right ! quite right !*) Material interests seemed to us to be sufficiently guaranteed, but nothing could weigh in the balance with the evacuation of the territory in so much shorter a time. Our feelings carried the day, and we are sure that we shall not be reproached here any more than we have been throughout the country." (*No ! no ! Quite right ! quite right !*)

In spite of the opposition which had been raised two months before, the approbation of the Chamber was not doubtful. Besides, the country, as M. Thiers reminded it, had decided. The question which followed this, in the message, was full of peril. It concerned commercial treaties. M. Thiers boldly faced it, and the solution he proposed was accepted without difficulty; it consisted in giving notice of the treaty, only for the purpose of fixing a date, with a view to continue the negotiations during the year which would elapse between the giving of notice and its withdrawal or renewal.

"The administration, as you know, consists first of all, of a well-chosen prefectoral staff, . . . (*ironical laughter and interruptions from some of the Right benches, murmurs of approval and disapproval,*) in a well-chosen prefectoral staff, well adapted to the populations, which it is called upon to regulate." (*Fresh interruptions.*)

M. Thiers, after having reminded his hearers that the choice of prefects, difficult at any time, is especially so in such troubled times, came after many arguments to the conclusion that from the evidence which he received from the departments, the administrative body was as well chosen as it was possible for it to be. His words were received with denials and murmurs from several of the Right benches. The President of the Assembly thought fit to recall these dissentients to a sense of propriety. His words were cheered only by the Left. "So it is allowable to praise but not to blame," cried M. de Lorgeril. —"Sir," replied M. Thiers, "having a written document to read, I am imperatively forbidden to reply to any interruption."

After this painful incident, the Assembly listened in silence, and even with signs of satisfaction, to a luminous exposition of our financial situation, the loan operations, and those whose object was the payment of the first two milliards into the German coffers. Even the enemies of M. Thiers felt the immensity of the service which he had just rendered. He ended the financial portion of his message by these thrilling words:— "The total budget reaches the sum of two milliards, 429,000,000, or, including departmental expenses, two milliards, 749,000,000; the war with Prussia will have added to our budget an annual

expenditure of 600,000,000 (24,000,000 sterling). Thus, whereas extravagance raised our budget from 1852 to 1870 from one milliard 500,000,000 to two milliards, 100,000,000 or 200,000,000; in one single year, 1870, a mad war will have raised it to two milliards, 749,000,000; from which it will follow that in eighteen years the total and annual increase of our budget has been one milliard, 250,000,000, that is to say, that our public burdens have been nearly doubled; to which we must add the loss of two provinces, and the loss of the greatness of France, if the greatness of France could perish." (*Great sensation.*)

M. Thiers then spoke of all that had been done to reconstruct the army, an admirable work, the honour of which belongs chiefly to himself. He explained the organization of the army-corps in time of peace. Formerly the only thing organized in time of peace was the regiment; it was this that made the beginning of a campaign so long and laborious. Our soldiers, accustomed to garrison life in towns, were not used to camp life. We have now 40,000 men encamped in huts, some of which are of masonry, the others of wood lined with wood. The soldier is healthily and comfortably lodged there, and finds himself better off than in most barracks.

This innovation on former custom was a little difficult to effect; it means a rough life for the

officers; but they acquire a taste for life in common, for work, and study. They find their satisfaction in the service they render to their men and to the country.

The question of military ranks was touched upon delicately. The necessities of the war had led to a temporary departure from all the rules of promotion. Captains had become Generals. Colonels had found themselves raised in a few months to the rank of generals of division and of commandants of army-corps. A commission had been appointed to reconsider these hasty promotions. Each man's service had been considered. Some had been maintained in their new ranks; others had lower positions assigned to them. No doubt these decisions had produced a vast amount of discontent among those whom they concerned. Older officers, who had been taken prisoner or whom chance had kept in obscurity, seeing new men put over their heads, might naturally feel discouraged or turn refractory. M. Thiers ascertained, to the eternal honour of our veterans, that nothing of the kind had taken place. "A split between the older officers, whose advancement was due to the length and distinction of their services, and the new men, who owed their promotion to very substantial services no doubt, but also to the rush of events, was prophesied to us. A rigorous spirit of justice which the

Government and the Commission of Ranks labour to obey, time which effaces all differences of origin, the good sense of our officers which leads them to understand the necessity of abnegation in order to return to a regular system, have forestalled the dangers which we were led to fear, and concord is restored between men worthy of serving together." (*Loud cheers.*)

All the difficulties of the moment having been reviewed, there remained the formidable question of recruiting. M. Thiers might have omitted it, since it was not on the order of the day; but he attached too much importance to it, not to confront with boldness, and directly attack one of the most popular delusions of the Chamber. Most of the deputies, both on the Right and on the Left, wanted compulsory service, with a very brief sojourn in barracks. They would have put up with three years, taking the entire contingents, which gave an army of 900,000 men, or even one of 1,000,000, if you took account of the 120,000 soldiers not recruited by roll of drum. "Numbers," said M. Thiers, "are no doubt of great importance, but quality is of much greater.

"If by compulsory service you mean that the French mind must be filled with the patriotic and moral principle, that the life of every Frenchman is due to France in moments of great peril, then

I agree with you, and that is how I understand compulsory service; but if you mean, that in time of peace as in time of war, every Frenchman must figure as a unit in the militant army, then you are pursuing a bubble, and exposing the country to the disorganization of civil society (*cheers and counter-cheers*) and to the absolute ruin of its finances, and you are also laying the foundation of an army, very numerous undoubtedly, but wholly unfit for real warfare. (*Cheers and counter-cheers renewed.*)

"Not only so, but I am going to show you that compulsory service is impracticable. The class which every year reaches the age of 21, the age at which they are liable to serve, numbers in France 300,000 men or thereabouts. If you enrol these 300,000 men, you would, with three years' service, have three contingents numbering about 900,000 men; but the elasticity of the budget, strained to the utmost, could not possibly maintain more than 450,000 men. What follows? why you must send half your men back to their homes, in the middle of the appointed time of service, in order to make room for the new comers.

"It follows that on the average our soldiers would only have eighteen months' training, and you cannot make a soldier in eighteen months, still less a non-commissioned officer. (*Cheers and*

counter-cheers.) The day on which you should adopt such a resolution, France would be lost. (*Uproar and long-continued cheers and counter-cheers.*)

"I will give you with regard to that, unanswerable authorities, and in particular the example of Prussia, whose success is due to the energy with which the king and his prime minister have striven for many years to extend the time of service."

M. Thiers then proceeded to unfold his own system: 90,000 men a year for eight years, five years under arms, with three years furlough renewable; the balance of the class, in the territorial army. "This army," said M. Thiers, "will unite solidity to an unequalled capacity for mobilization. The burden will fall lightly on the population, besides, the possibility of the substitution of one man's number for another, will lighten it still further. (*Hear! hear! from different parts of the Assembly.*)

"It is in this territorial Guard living at home, that you will be able to organize an interior force to be entrusted with the safeguard of the city. (*Murmurs, cheers, and counter-cheers.*)

"I have already said, gentlemen, that, reading as I do a written document, I cannot answer interruptions.

"I assume that you wish to know what the

Government thinks. Well, I am telling you. I will undertake to answer your objections presently; if I do not answer according to the conviction of the majority of the Assembly, to which alone I appeal as judge here, then I shall be in the wrong, and I know what I ought to do when I am in the wrong." (*Prolonged excitement on opposite sides.*)

From several benches.—"Go on, do not answer interruptions."

M. Thiers proceeded,—

"We propose that you should choose the territorial Guard among the men who alone have a true interest in order." (*Renewed interruptions.*)

The striking feature in this long message is its courage and honesty. This complete exposition of the situation, without extenuation, without reticence, this anticipated declaration of the resolutions of the Chief of the State on points on which he was at variance with the Assembly, have an essentially Republican character. They have dignity and true force. The Left, although it murmured, felt it. All these ideas on recruiting, on the substitution of one number for another, on the formation of a civic guard, on the tax on raw material, offended it; they waited to oppose them without withdrawing their support from an honest, patriotic, and capable Govern-

ment, to which it looked for the welfare of the country. The Right, on its side, saw, with pleasure differences arising which it hoped to widen and utilize.

The contests became more frequent. Each day, so to speak, brought one. On 8th December, M. Duchâtel and M. Humbert demanded the return of the Assembly to Paris. The new Minister for the Interior (M. Casimir Périer) without insisting, showed his approval. Urgency was negatived. Applause burst forth,—

M. de Rességuier said, "It is France that applauds!" The President declares that MM. Duchâtel and Humbert's proposals are sent down to the initiative commission.

A voice from the Right exclaimed, "Buried!"

On 18th December, a very brisk debate arises at the tribune on the nature of the pledge given by the Orleans princes, that they would not occupy their seats at the Assembly. M. Pascal Duprat, M. Cochery, M. Leblond, M. Duvergier de Hauranne on one side, MM. Batbie and de Broglie on the other, take part in it. While the speakers are in the tribune, animated conversations are being carried on by the other deputies. In several parts of the hall these discussions degenerate into quarrels. The result of the debate was not doubtful. The Bonapartists, thinking of their

princes, gave their support to the Right Centre; a good many Republicans refused practically to prolong exceptional laws, and to regard the princes' presence as a danger. Only a favourable vote could come from this collection of interests, compromises, and partisanship, in which policy, that is to say, a strong desire for the general welfare, counted in fact for very little.

M. Thiers limited himself to declaring through M. Casimir Périer, at the commencement of the sitting, that the engagement having been made with him and with the Assembly, he personally declined to pronounce upon it. The Assembly almost followed his example; it refused to give an opinion, but even that left the door open. The following order of the day, proposed by M. Fresneau (a legitimist), was voted by 643 to 2. "The National Assembly, considering that it is neither responsible for, nor has any opinion to give as to engagements in which it has not participated, passes to the order of the day."

This had been an embarrassing matter for M. Thiers and some of his ministers. M. Thiers had long been King Louis-Philippe's minister; and he never disowned an opinion, or a friendship. If the Orleans princes had required his services as private individuals, he would have placed himself at their command. He did not look on an

Orleanist restoration as immediately possible; he did not even count on it for the future. He often said that if the Republic fell, neither the Count de Chambord, nor the house of Orleans would replace it in power. He became more and more convinced that henceforward the only government which France would bear was that of a liberal conservative Republic. This same government was, for the time being, the established government, which it was the duty of all good citizens to support and serve. For him personally it was even still more a duty than for others, for he had pledged his word. On their side, the Orleans princes and their friends denied any idea of upsetting the Republic. The princes declared openly that they were neither pretenders nor factious; they only asked to be allowed to return to their country, and to devote themselves to its service under the form of government which it had chosen. It was evident that if the Republic committed excesses or faults which would render its existence impossible, and if France wished to return to a constitutional monarchy, she would find the Orleans princes ready to enter into her views, as they had been in 1830; but they would do nothing to urge the step upon her; they would not resort to conspiracies or indirect attacks; but take their place in the Assembly with the liberal

conservative liberals, and give their frank support to M. Thiers' Government. This was what they said, and M. Thiers did not doubt their sincerity. Certainly, if France had been condemned to another revolution, of the three monarchical forms he would have chosen for her that one which he had already served, to whose greatness he had so powerfully contributed, and which, according to him, offered the necessary guarantees for the maintenance of order and liberty. Neither the princes nor their partisans dreamt of having recourse to revolutionary means in order to establish this government on the ruins of the Republic. It is not in their traditions, it never entered their thoughts, to have recourse to force. They only obtained the support of Legitimists and Bonapartists, because every one felt quite safe as to their intentions, and also, if the whole truth must be told, as to their resources in men, in money, and in popularity. M. Thiers was consequently quite at ease as to the question of civil war. He knew that the Orleanists would not even go so far as to offer a constitutional monarchy; that they would limit themselves to holding it in readiness for the day when it should be called for. It was his opinion that this day would never come. He believed the future of France to be contained in the alternative, Republic or Empire, the

Republic if the Republicans were wise; the Empire if they gave themselves up to that demagogic influence which had placed Napoleon III. in power in 1851, and the Commune in 1871. At the same time he thought that,—even admitting the perfect sincerity of the Orleans princes, and he admitted it, even believing that of the three monarchies that of July was the only one which a liberal could accept, and he believed it,—the Republic was too new, too provisional, too much contested, surrounded by too many enemies and dangers, to be able to bear the additional embarrassment which the Orleans princes would occasion, in spite of their disinterestedness and their wisdom, by the sole fact of their presence. He could answer for them; could he answer for their adherents? If the laws excluding the members of late reigning families were abolished in their favour, would it be possible to maintain them against others? If the Count de Chambord presented himself, or the son of Napoleon III. braved the remembrance of Cayenne and the remembrance of Sedan, to what laws could recourse be had? Of course, it is painful to impose a prolonged exile on men whom one respects, and on a family for which one has no feelings but those of gratitude; but kings, while they are on the throne, are so highly privileged that they cannot claim the rights of

private persons after their fall. Ostracism is one of the forms of their greatness. A prince's exile is a private misfortune, but it is not an injustice.

This is what M. Thiers said to the princes, to their friends, to the Republicans. In his personal position it required courage to say it. His wish, which he proclaimed openly, was that the Chamber, without pronouncing the name of such or such a dynasty, should maintain the existing law, the law exiling all members of all the families who had once reigned in France. He was not listened to. The Republicans had old inconsistencies on this head to expiate. In 1848 they had banished the Orleans family, maintained the exile of the elder branch, and admitted the Bonapartes even to a seat in the Assembly. On the present occasion they would establish equality among crowns. Equality in proscription, as M. Thiers understood it, would be, they maintained, an inconsistency of another kind, for the Republic does not proscribe. M. Thiers was therefore defeated on the abolition of the laws of exile. He insisted that at any rate the princes should not take their places in the Assembly, to play the part of chiefs of a party in spite of themselves. He might have said that in this he gave them wise counsel; but he was too sincere and too proud to hold such language; he spoke only of the

difficulties of the Government. The princes gave a provisional pledge; after some time they considered that this promise had no longer any *raison d'être*. M. Thiers declared that he no longer insisted on it. This was the only way to put an end to a contest which was tiresome to all parties. His words were courageous and explicit. He warned the Chamber, he warned the Republicans, he warned the princes. He could not do more. The result was a check to his policy; and the course which he had taken aroused violent enmity against him in an intriguing and intelligent circle.

A part of December, and almost the whole of January, 1871, were taken up in debates on the income tax, which M. Thiers passionately opposed, and the tax on raw material, which he supported with enthusiasm, perhaps because as an old protectionist he thought it excellent, or because as a financier he considered that we had no more certain resource. Not a day passed without his taking his place at the tribune, sometimes making long speeches, when it was a question of principle that was to be carried, sometimes multiplying short observations, and rectifying facts, for he constantly played the part of leader, during these two years, in all financial matters. The whole of this period was marked by scenes of unheard-of violence.

On 10th January it was proposed to interpolate into the debate on the budget, a purely political question, the return of the Assembly and of the Government to Paris. M. Thiers begged the Assembly not to interrupt the debate.

"I hope," he said, "that you will put yourselves in the place of those who are obliged to assist at all these debates, and take part in them without any rest. . . . (*Exclamations from the Right.*)

"As for me, I assure you that it would be impossible for me now to interrupt a financial debate which constantly requires from all of us most complicated and difficult calculations."

A member of the Right.—"Come! come!" (*Allons donc.*)

M. Thiers.—"Those who deny that, do not take the same trouble that we do every day."

The Assembly had come to treat the President of the Republic with disrespect. They accused him openly of breach of faith, they continually interrupted him by "*Allons donc!*" and calls to order. He took things with a very high hand on these occasions. One day he was at the tribune answering a speaker of the Right who had sharply criticized the war budget. "Yes!" he said, "Yes! we have increased the military expenditure. Do you believe that we have done it in

order to burden the country with taxes? Do bring us a sensible man here, who understands a little about business." This was very contemptuous. The Right and Right Centre indignantly remonstrated.

Some members of the Right.—"Order! order!"

M. Thiers.—"Order! as much as you please. Call to order! Get it! I shall be very glad if you succeed, for the burden which weighs on me is really enormous. (*Uproar on the Right and Centre. Loud cheers from the Left.*)

"I expose myself to the call to order. I defy you to ask for it! Come, then, and ask it! . . ." (*More uproar on the Right;—fresh cries of "Order!" on the Left; cheers.*)

M. Grévy.—"No one has the right to ask for the call to order; the President alone has the right to pronounce it. If you do not already know this, gentlemen, look again at your rules; you will find it there; but in the meantime do not interrupt.

Left.—"Quite right! quite right!"

M. Thiers.—"There is another means in the power of this Assembly, in the power of my interrupters: that of a vote of want of confidence. Well! let them bring it forward!"

The entire Right rose; but M. Thiers did not give way an inch.

The 19th January, 1872, was a solemn day. A debate on the new taxes had already occupied twenty sittings. M. Thiers, who was as indefatigable as M. Pouyer-Quertier, had already spoken five times from the tribune. On this day he again took his place there, in order to make a supreme effort. The situation was becoming most serious for him. M. Lucien Brun had read from the tribune the offer signed by the chief houses of business, to pay 165,000,000 as a tax on the total of their transactions, in order to avoid a tax on raw material. Seventy-eight deputies of all parties had signed proposals with the same object. Amongst those of the Left were MM. Louis Blanc, Gambetta, Pelletan, Larrieu, &c.; of the Right MM. Montgolfier, Caryon-Latour, Decazes, &c., the heads of important houses, such as MM. Deregnancourt, Feray, Martell (Charente), Alphonse Cordier, Steinheil, Mestreau, Warnier, &c. &c. M. Thiers did not propose to fix, immediately, the amount of the tax on raw material, but he asked the Chamber to vote the principle. The excitement was so great that at first he could hardly make himself heard. He complained of this vehemently, and justly.

"How, gentlemen! you think I am wrong in regretting the spectacle which we afford, and you are so excited about this bill, that you

will not allow the person whom you have honoured with your confidence, and whom you have qualified with the title of Chief of the Executive, even to complete the simple statement of his own ideas, a statement which is in no way binding, but which is an effort, a desperate effort, to get you out of the difficulty in which you, in which we all are placed (*murmurs from some benches*). You do not let me finish my sentence. It is impossible to transact business in this manner." The whole of his speech was bitter. He was very hard on the proposal brought to the tribune by M. Lucien Brun. "Is it their money that they offer us? It is only a system of taxation! Who are they? M. Lucien Brun tells us they are fifty very honourable merchants; this may be the case; I do not deny it, I do not know them: therefore it is all the easier for me to have confidence in them." He was equally severe on the proposal to appoint a commission, after twenty days of public debate: "a proposal which is utterly useless and, excuse the expression, absolutely puerile." He resolutely brought forward the question of Government. "I should have done this three days ago if I had not given in to the wishes of my colleagues. I always call them my colleagues, and regard them as my devoted auxiliaries, as my friends; I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to them for their

devotion, courage, knowledge of business. I have given in, I repeat, to their wish for conciliation, and now, at the last hour of these long debates, a proposal is made to you to annul them by nominating a fresh commission. No, gentlemen, it is time this should cease; it is I who say it, and I have my reasons. We must present a more dignified spectacle to the country and the world. I entreat of you, gentlemen, let us appear before the world, if you wish to have its esteem, its support, and its good wishes, as a grave and earnest nation, which knows how to master, not only paltry spirit, as I said the other day, but popular turmoil, and those clamorous material interests which are lost to shame when it is a question of satisfying them."

M. Thiers was defeated by the vote. The Assembly, by 360 to 318, adopted M. Féray's motion, which ran thus :—

"The National Assembly, reserving the principle of a tax on raw material, decides that a commission of fifteen members be appointed to inquire into the proposed tariffs and other questions raised by this tax, to which it will only have recourse in the event of the impossibility of otherwise making up the budget."

The next day, 20th January, at the commencement of the sitting, M. Grévy read the following letter :—

"M. le Président,

"I beg you will have the kindness to convey my resignation as President of the Republic, to the National Assembly. I need not add that until my place is supplied I shall continue to watch over the affairs of State with my accustomed zeal. Nevertheless the Assembly must understand that the vacancy should be as brief as possible.

"The Ministers have also tendered me their resignation and I have felt bound to accept it. Like myself, they will continue to transact the business of their departments with the greatest assiduity, until their successors are appointed.

"Receive, Monsieur le Président, &c. &c.

"A. THIERS."

The reading of this letter aroused all the members of the Assembly to only one desire: that M. Thiers should be persuaded to retract it. The Right shared this wish as strongly and sincerely as the Left. M. Batbie, M. de Kerdrel, M. Deseilligny successively mounted the tribune to propose a Vote of Confidence. M. Laboulaye on his side proposed one recapitulating the great services rendered by M. Thiers to France. After a debate which was confused, but in which the conformity of intention was apparent, the Chamber adopted the following resolution:—

"Whereas the Assembly, in its resolution of yesterday, went no further than to reserve an economic question; whereas its vote is in no way to be regarded as an act of distrust or hostility, and does not imply a refusal of that support which it has always given the Government;

"The Assembly makes a fresh appeal to the patriotism of the President of the Republic, and refuses to accept his resignation." (*Hear, hear.*)

The official account recorded that the voting was almost unanimous.

M. Cochery.—"There are eight noes! . . . ."

The President.—"The committee think that they will be fulfilling the wishes of the Assembly, if they forward the resolution that it has just passed, to the President of the Republic."

From all sides.—"Yes! yes! Quite right!"

M. le Comte de Bastard.—"I ask that the debate be adjourned, so that there may be time to forward this resolution."

The President.—"The debate is about to be adjourned."

The debate was adjourned, and the members repaired to the lobbies and passages, the reporters' office, the coffee-room, the sitting-rooms, and the lecture-rooms, forming separate groups, and carrying on very animated conversations.

"At five the President took his seat and announced the resumption of the debate.

"Some time elapsed before the members resumed their seats, and silence was established in the Assembly. At last the Vice-president, M. Benoist-d'Azy, ascended the tribune.

M. Benoist-d'Azy.—"Gentlemen, the Assembly having almost unanimously desired that its committee should convey to the President of the Republic the expression of its opinion, the President of the Assembly did me the honour to confer this mission upon me, with two of my colleagues, the vice-presidents, the questors, and several secretaries of committees.

"We have seen the President of the Republic. I had the honour of speaking with him and informing him of the sentiments of the Assembly and the resolution which it had passed; I read it aloud to him.

"The President of the Republic was much touched by it, deeply moved. He begged us to tell the Assembly, that when he maintained an opinion with passionateness, it was because his convictions were very profound; that he had felt neither irritation nor personal mortification, but that the depth of his conviction was such that he felt it his duty to manifest it.

"At the same time, he told us, that after such

overtures had been made to him, and the resolution that had been passed by the whole Assembly, it was impossible for him not to rally once more the little strength remaining to him, that he might devote himself to his country, and those duties to the Assembly which he could still fulfil.

"He spoke of his fatigue, of his health, and of his fears that he would not be able to respond to those expectations which the Assembly had a right to form. He, however, charged us to tell you, that he could not refuse to yield to that which you asked of him.

"Thus, gentlemen, I have the pleasure to inform you, that the resignation which has been read to you is, in fact, withdrawn. (*Hear, hear.*)

"I must add, that we also told him, that in this resolution which the Assembly had voted, a desire that the Government should remain as it was previously constituted was equally manifest."

The satisfaction was profound and unanimous. The Left-Centre and Left experienced the feelings of friends who have had a temporary disagreement with a man for whom they entertain the greatest respect and affection, and who return with greater pleasure to their former sentiments when the misunderstanding has been removed. The extreme Left and the whole Right were still

inimical. The Right felt, more strongly than ever, that M. Thiers was the necessary man. They had not for an instant contemplated the possibility of replacing him. Later, in one of his fits of pitiless frankness, he was to tell them that they would think of that when the reconstitution should be complete, the ransom paid, France evacuated; because then only would their courage be equal to the occasion. For the present they only thought of ruling, or at least restraining him. The triumph which he had just achieved was but the more brilliant. This majority, which for several months had unceasingly harassed and even abused him, which had turned out his ministers, and carried its point, both as regarded remaining at Versailles, and the return of the princes, which sharply criticized his least utterances, which made it a crime that he had not gone fast enough during the siege, and had not been pitiless enough after it; which showed beforehand that it would dissent from him on the duration of military service, and all economic questions; this majority, which above all was angry with him for maintaining intact the Republican form of government, as he had promised, and for not preparing the way to a restoration; this majority, which would joyfully have appointed his successor, if it only could find a man equal to

the occasion; this majority, braved and almost insulted by him in its turn, had begged his pardon by a solemn vote and by an embassy. It is not enough to say by an embassy, for almost the whole Chamber had followed its Committee to the Prefecture. Never did man receive a more striking demonstration of the greatness of his position. Princes who have crowns presented to them, have conspired and truckled in order to get them offered. But this citizen had positively rejected power and treated that Assembly, which was now at his feet, with scorn.

In spite of all this, the result of the crisis was not good. The partisans of commercial liberty, of short military service, the monarchical parties of all shades, saw what a strong will, what obstinate resolution they had to encounter. The public, who were frightened by the resignation, were not sufficiently reassured by its reversal. They asked whether the experiment might not be repeated, and whether by-and-by M. Thiers might not be taken at his word. Those who closely followed the movements of the different parties, foresaw that the Right would bide its time, and that not being able to abdicate in favour of any of its chiefs, it would shelter their coalitions and intrigues behind an epaulette.

III.

If any doubt could be entertained respecting the plans and intentions of the Right at this time, that is to say, more than a year before the 24th May, it would suffice to go back to the very curious sitting of 9th March, 1872. M. Léonce de Guiraud questioned the Cabinet on the resignation of M. Pouyer-Quertier, who had been replaced by M. de Goulard. As M. Dufaure very justly pointed out, M. Léonce de Guiraud, in his speech, spoke of everything except M. Pouyer-Quertier's resignation. That was the pretext for, not the object of, the interpellation. M. Pouyer-Quertier then rose; he spoke of his services, which no one denied, and which in fact could not be denied without the most flagrant injustice, and, moreover, he loudly condemned the practice of "fictitious mandates." But the interest of the debate did not lie in M. Pouyer-Quertier's speech, nor the speeches of MM. Casimir Perier and Dufaure; it lay entirely in that of M. Léonce de Guiraud.

The latter speaker stated that he took the opportunity of this resignation of a minister, to ask in perfect candour, whether the Cabinet represented a policy, or whether policy was wholly centred, as was the case under the Empire, in the Head of the Government. "We have," he said, "ministers, but we have not a Ministry."

This, in M. de Guiraud's eyes, was so great a misfortune that we need look no further for the cause of the general discontent and uneasiness which prevailed everywhere. The Assembly had given up too much; it reigned, but it was M. Thiers who governed: hence all the mischief. It was evident that if M. Thiers, instead of governing according to his own lights, had faithfully followed the wishes of the Assembly, France would have regained, as if by enchantment, her security and her greatness.

This first point is to be noted. M. Léonce de Guiraud declared expressly, repeated several times over, with a variety of metaphors, that the Government went one way, and that the Chamber would have liked to go the other. That had been said more clearly and precisely by M. de Lavergne; and besides it was quite evident. But the originality of M. de Guiraud's discourse consisted in this; instead of enumerating, as M. de Lavergne had done, the minor dissensions on taxation, on

the return to Paris, on the duration of military service, &c., . . . he went straight to the unpardonable error committed by M. Thiers, the error of continually giving fresh chances to the Republic. We must quote the passage, for it contains the pith of the whole speech, the rest, though well turned, is only padding.

"You have rendered a Monarchy very difficult, perhaps impossible.

"Why is this? Because by dint of showing, as you have done for the last year, that all the leanings of the Government were on the side of a Republic, you have attached to this word a public infinitely numerous in France, who have no very fixed opinion, who only want to know which way the wind blows in order that they may turn with it, and who, following your example, have turned towards the Republic, not in sufficient numbers nor with sufficient influence to found it, for no foundation could be laid on such uncertain and shifting ground; but to render a Monarchy infinitely more difficult, and to make that which seemed at the commencement, and that which many still believe to be the only anchor of safety, appear in the eyes of many others a chimera, or an adventure."

By this declaration, which was less artful than M. de Guiraud imagined, he involuntarily moved

the question a step forward. There had been three phases in the relations of the majority with M. Thiers. The majority disagreed with him in principle, but it hoped to recall, or to govern him; to this end it counted on the errors of the Republican party. When all hope of making use of M. Thiers to found a Monarchy appeared decidedly unfounded, the Right were obliged to keep him at the head of affairs until the liberation of the territory had been accomplished, because he alone was equal to the task. They intended when once that was accomplished to throw him over, but to throw him over at an appointed time. They took care not to say this openly. Even on 20th January, they were as prodigal of demonstrations and marks of deference as the Left. M. de Guiraud thought himself very profound for telling his friends' secret out aloud. He probably said to himself that every one knew it, and that he would have the merit of frankness. He did not imagine that there are situations which can only be prolonged by avoiding the utterance of the decisive word. A married woman, who is not very scrupulous, will allow a lover who lets his love appear without declaring it to visit her; she even takes a pleasure in knowing herself loved; but if the lover declares himself, if he says, "I love you,"

she dismisses him. After M. de Guiraud's speech, it was evident that the majority intended to overthrow M. Thiers. It was only a question of time. Both parties knew this, and no one had any right to be astonished. M. Thiers said disdainfully from the tribune, when they were harassing him one day, "You had better wait until the territory has been evacuated before you push me to extremities, because then the task will be on a level with your capacities."

It might have been supposed that M. Léonce de Guiraud's speech would lead to some practical result. "You have," he said to M. Thiers, "only to take a ministry from among the majority, and to govern in complete accord with it. You would then have a majority of 300, which would make everything possible."

Alas! herein consisted M. de Guiraud's delusion and that of his friends. They believed themselves to be a governing majority, and they were only a coalition. If M. Thiers had tried to follow the ingenuous advice thus given him, he would have had a homogeneous Cabinet composed, like Marshal MacMahon's first Cabinet, of three Legitimists, three Orleanists, and one or two Bonapartists. He sometimes said to M. de Guiraud's majority, laughing at them to their faces, "You are three competitors for a single throne, not

one of you will ever sit on it, for the other two will take care to prevent him." Have not his words come true? When M. de Guiraud spoke, 9th March, 1872, he was surrounded by pilgrims from Antwerp, who were already preparing their valises and their harangues. The visitors from Frohsdorf were not far off, nor those from Chiselhurst, nor the members of that "Great Council," dreamt of for an instant by M. de Broglie. Their attempts, which every one, except perhaps M. de Guiraud, foresaw, were made with perfect order, as if to prove to all how homogeneous was this majority. The Legitimists came first. The others gave them precedence, without attaching much importance to it, as they would to a lady. At the beginning of 1872 they made their pilgrimage to Antwerp, which was not more dangerous than that which was made to Belgrave Square in the reign of Louis-Philippe. They believed themselves to be nearer success the following year, at the time of the fusion. Their success would, without doubt, have been very ephemeral, but in truth, they had a real chance that time, very much as General Mallett had once upon a time had his. France woke up in time, and the white flag was definitively laid aside with those glorious relics which are loved without being

feared. The Legitimists having thus been put aside, the Orleanist party entered on the scene with M. de Broglie's constitution. This party, however, made a false entry, venturing only a few steps, rather awkwardly, beyond the side-wings; a singular error in a party which had had up to that time, among other merits, that of choosing its opportunity well. Lastly, the Bonapartists, who suddenly altered the tone of their journals, made processions to England, had funeral services performed at Saint-Augustin, and attempted to get up some mob-meetings, enlivened by personal violence, at the St. Lazare railway station.

These attempts, which were only astonishing from their excess of silliness, have been reproduced under various forms each time the Republic has been on the point of a definitive establishment; and they have brought out more and more strikingly the homogeneity and the prestige of that faithful, impregnable, and above all sincere parliamentary majority, which offered its support to M. Thiers in the person of the ingenuous and generous M. de Guiraud.

After all, this gentleman, who had every sort of intelligence except the political, was right in saying that M. Thiers had done service to the Republican party. What he did not see was that

M. Thiers served the Republic without having any partiality for it, merely in serving his country. M. Thiers, we have already reminded our readers, had in his Cabinet only one minister who wore the Republican badge; his representatives abroad were not very strong Republicans: in London, the Duke de Broglie; at Berlin, M. de Gontaut-Biron; at St. Petersburg, General Le Flô; at Vienna, M. d'Harcourt; at Constantinople, M. de Vogüe; at Rome, M. de Corcelles. The prefects were chosen from all parties. Among them were a few old Republicans, a few converts, many expectants. All these lived under the Pact of Bordeaux. But in spite of unfortunate concessions, which it had been impossible for him to avoid making at the commencement, M. Thiers re-established the unity and authority of the Government, under the Republic; he reconstituted all the administrations, making them act, under the Republic; he restored security to capital and gave an impetus to labour, under the Republic; he kept up excellent relations with other States, under the Republic; he contracted a loan of five milliards, under the Republic; and the whole world offered him money, as if to protest against the attacks of which the Republican form of Government was the object. He obtained the support of the Republican party

without making any concessions either as to principles or persons; he taught it wisdom; he transformed it, slowly but surely, into a party capable of governing. M. Thiers was in the right when he said, "I keep my charge intact, I favour no party;" and M. de Guiraud was in the right when he replied, "You establish the Republic."

The Right saw that lapse of time was on the side of the Republic, and that if they could not establish anything, at least they must strike some great blow, which by hindering the progress of Republican ideas would give the reaction time to arrange a course of action. The monarchical parties counted up their adherents: the pure Right had 80; the others united produced 250. They must again negotiate. The Right-Centre tried to attract the Left-Centre without success. The Left-Centre, associating itself with the evident feeling of the country, inclined more and more to the Republic. Only one single hope of salvation remained to them. If they could but persuade M. Thiers by flattery or by threats to separate himself from the Republicans, he would become the Chief of the Right-Centre, would bring to it his popularity, his talents, and the governing forces. They saw that they must make this last attempt before entering the lists against him. It seemed impossible that he should not be

frightened at the increasing growth of radicalism, seeing that the four elections of 9th June, 1872, had resulted in a Bonapartist for Corsica, and three radicals for the Nord, Somme, and Yonne. This was quite M. de Guiraud's plan: but instead of thoughtlessly declaring it at the tribune, they tried diplomatic measures. The Right-Centre chose its ambassadors, who went to the Prefecture on 17th June. No pains were spared in order to win over the President of the Republic. They loaded him with praise and protestations of friendship. What did they ask of him? To come back to his own and become their leader. All the conservatives of the Right, the Right-Centre, and the Left-Centre, would rally round him. The interview lasted two hours and a half. M. Thiers, like his interlocutors, was courteous, and deferential. He declared that he was as much a conservative as they; he said even more than they. He enumerated all the acts of his Government, and easily demonstrated to them that after having crushed the Commune, he had fought inch by inch, with all the legal means in his power, against the progress of socialistic and communistic doctrines. Certainly, universal suffrage, whenever it had been called upon to elect, had returned Republican candidates. The Government could neither blame nor praise itself for this, as it repudiated all the

practices of official candidature. These recurring experiments, all yielding the same result, only proved one thing, that the monarchical system was at an end. "You wish to be conservatives," said M. Thiers, "and I also wish it; but there is only one way of being so; that is, the establishment of a conservative Republic."

"We cannot sufficiently admire," said M. John Lemoine in the *Débats* next day, "the pains which the conservatives are taking to found the Republic, and to give M. Thiers opportunities for pronouncing and affirming it more and more categorically. This is the only visible result of the conference which took place yesterday at Versailles, and which appeared to us to be a repetition, from a parliamentary point of view, of what used to be called "the demonstration of the Fur Caps." . . .

"The welfare of the country enjoined that the truce of parties which had for its charter and concordat that indeterminate, unwritten convention, called the Pact of Bordeaux, should be maintained. When we try to make out what the Pact of Bordeaux exactly means, we cannot succeed, and this is very fortunate. It is like the English Constitution, which is never overthrown, because no one knows where to find it. The Pact of Bordeaux was a sort of moral contract, in

which the different parties undertook not to raise questions concerning forms of government, until that especial work which was the Assembly's mission had been accomplished.

"We must admit that the President devoted himself to this work with that patriotic passion which is his most striking characteristic. He has invariably told all the deputations, which have come to him at different times, to offer advice or to address remonstrances to him, that he would observe the convention made at Bordeaux, that he would maintain neutrality between all parties, and devote all his energies to reorganizing the country and putting it in such a position that it may choose for itself its own form of government. Yesterday, however, he changed his tone, and, according to all the reports that have been given of his language, he clearly affirmed his resolution to work at the foundation and consolidation of the Republic. It was proposed to force him to a declaration of his policy; he has made it, and we can only congratulate the conservative deputation on the answer they have obtained."

The further they went, the clearer the relative position of parties became. M. Thiers saw more plainly each day that the Republic must be definitely established, and the Right saw that he knew this. Among the many scenes where

this antagonism burst forth, we will refer only to one which took place 12th July, 1872. It is evident that if the Right had felt equal to undertaking the Government, they would have overthrown M. Thiers on that day.

The President of the Republic was in the tribune speaking on a question of taxation. We have already stated that he took part personally in all financial debates, and showed admirable energy and power. "You should no more doubt us," he said, "when it is a question of maintaining material order, than if it were a question of moral order." (*Loud cheers.*)

M. de Belcastel.—"For that kind of order you yet have everything to do."

M. Thiers.—"But, gentlemen, you have given us a form of government which is called a Republic . . . ." (*Yes! yes! from the Left. Cheers.*)

M. Carayon-Latour.—"No! no! never!"

From the Left.—"Yes! yes!"

From the Right.—"No! no!"

M. Langlois.—"How can you say No? What about the laws you have voted?"

M. Princeteau.—"There is no definite form of government."

Colonel de Chadois.—"Yes! yes!"

M. Thiers.—"Gentlemen, let me beg of you . . . ."

M. le Comte de Rességuier.—"We beg to remind you of the Pact of Bordeaux . . . . (*uproar*) and the engagements which you made, on your word of honour, when we appointed you Chief of the Executive." (*The noise drowned the honourable member's voice.*)

M. le Baron Chaurand.—"It is not correct to say that we have confided to you a form of government. (*Increasing noise.*) When we constituted the Executive Power at Bordeaux, it was expressly agreed that the form of government was reserved." (*A great many members here rose on the Right and Left and interpellated each other with much animation.*)

M. Thiers.—"Pray be calm, gentlemen!"

M. le Baron Chaurand.—"You took a solemn pledge to respect that reservation which was made by the Assembly."

From the Left.—"It is not your turn to speak. Order! order!"

M. le Vicomte d'Aboville.—"I call history to witness, we were solemnly promised at Bordeaux that nothing would be done to prejudge the form of government."

M. le Baron Chaurand, trying to make himself heard above the noise.—"A contract was made between the Assembly and the Chief of the Executive. The Assembly has faithfully observed it,

and you, you violate it by affirming a Republic, which we have not accepted" .... (*We cannot hear! we cannot hear!*) "and which we do not wish to accept. We demand that according to the Pact of Bordeaux you withdraw that assertion: 'that we have given you a form of government which is called the Republic.'" (*Continued noise.*)

M. le Vicomte de Lorgeril (rising).—"The Republic has given us the Commune."

M. Thiers.—"Be calm, gentlemen, I beg of you. If you would only let me finish my sentence you would see" .... (*Fresh interruption.*)

M. le Marquis de Franclieu.—"You have no right to impose the Republic on us, and we have a right to protest against you."

M. Thiers.—"I shall soon have finished, if you will have the goodness to let me complete my argument.

"The honourable member who last addressed you spoke of the maintenance of order, permit me also to speak of it, you will see what is my purpose in so doing.

"I did not intend by these expressions any attack on your principles, which I know and deeply respect; I wished to speak of an actual fact, of the form of the government."

M. Dahirel.—"It is only provisional!"

M. Thiers.—"But gentlemen . . . . (*Fresh interruption.*)

"Gentlemen, when you have before you a man who has not, in the faintest degree, any intention of awakening political passions, of offending them, of wounding them" . . . .

A member of the Right.—"And who never fails to do so." (*Noise.*)

Left.—"Order! order!"

The President.—"Gentlemen, have the goodness to be silent."

M. Thiers.—"I repeat, gentlemen, that I wish to make no attack on your principles, which I know, and for which I have the deepest respect . . . ."

M. Princeteau.—"Say on our right."

The President.—"Sir, it is not your place to remodel the speaker's sentences; and as he says nothing hurtful to you, you have not the right to interrupt him."

M. Princeteau.—"I claim that neither my right nor that of the Assembly be set aside."

The President.—"Gentlemen, I beg that you will allow the President of the Republic to speak. You will oblige me to call whomsoever may interrupt him to order. The excitement has been much too great, and has lasted much too long."

We must add here for those who are unaccus-

tomed to attend the Assembly, that the official reports, although admirably done, do not even give a feeble idea of these parliamentary tumults. This one passed the bounds of anything that could be imagined. It was an unchaining of the most violent passions. And what was the origin of it? M. Thiers had said that the Republic had been placed in his hands at Bordeaux. Could this be denied? Had not the title of President of the Republic been conferred on him later at Versailles? Had that been forgotten? Had he said anything more than that the Republic was the actual Government? Really nothing. There was nothing in his words to justify the insults that were heaped on him. The anger of the Right against the Republic, and against the man who had not opposed it, had exploded on the slightest pretext, because they already could hardly restrain it.

M. Thiers again went on with his speech. He was always master of himself during these great storms.

"I respect every one's convictions. I have too much knowledge of the world, of men, of different parties, not to have learned to respect all when they are sincere . . . .

"I would not wound anyone's feelings, especially those of the men sitting on this side (*the Right*). But I have heard it said, permit me to use the

word,—let me pronounce it without getting into a rage with me,—I have sometimes heard it said, This is a Republic; agreed, but a conservative Republic! (*Murmurs on the Right. Hear! hear! from the Left.*)

"Well, gentlemen! it is Providence,—happily greater than we are, more judicious than we are, calmer than we are, who decides the form of governments. To endeavour to encroach upon its functions is ridiculous, I should almost say contemptible folly. I have not that intention. But this fact being granted, I say, As far as we are concerned, so long as we shall remain under this form of Government and that Providence shall keep us there . . . . (*murmurs*), I do not know what may be the future form of Government; but if I can do anything for this one it shall be a conservative Republic; yes, an essentially conservative Republic" . . . . (*Long and resounding cheers from the Left, and exclamations from the Right.*)

M. Depeyre.—"And the Pact of Bordeaux?"

M. le Marquis de Dampierre.—"You said the contrary at Bordeaux; yes, the contrary, to us individually."

M. le Comte de Rességuier.—"We remain faithful to the Pact of Bordeaux; but you, you forget it. We invoke your word of honour." (*Increasing uproar. Several members on the Left are*

on their feet, and continue to cheer the President of the Republic.)

M. le Marquis de Mornay.—"I demand that the report shall state from which side the cheers came after the words just pronounced by the President of the Republic."

M. Lacretelle.—"France cries bravo for us!"

M. Thiers.—"Gentlemen, be calm, I beg of you. (*Uproar.*) Gentlemen, I entreat you to listen to me."

M. Carayon-Latour.—"Wait, M. le Président de la Republique, to make your explanation until there is silence. Repeat your words at Bordeaux, and every one will be satisfied."

M. le Comte de Rességuier.—"I affirm . . . ." (*Violent exclamations from several benches. Cries of Order! order!*)

The President.—"Gentlemen, be so good as not to renew these incessant interruptions."

M. Thiers.—"Yet once again, gentlemen . . ."

M. Baragnan.—"M. le Président, say at least one word which will dispense with the necessity of our answering you to-day. (*Exclamations and murmurs from the Left. Cheers from the Right.*)

M. Thiers.—"I feel, as you do, that before the Assembly separates we must have a very precise, very positive explanation, for the sake both of the Assembly and of the country. (*Yes! yes! Hear! hear!*)

"For my part, I am far from wishing to avoid it. It is hateful to me to walk in obscurity (*Hear!*), and above all when it is a question of government and of the tranquillity of the country, which can only be brought about through the satisfaction of all honourable opinions, every obscurity ought to disappear. Only, allow me to tell you that you are too much excited; you ought to perceive from the agitation which prevails that this is not the moment for giving a calm, quiet, and just interpretation to what you call the Bordeaux programme. Let us put it off to a more suitable time, and you will find that I neither wish to weaken its force nor to change its meaning."

The Assembly began at last to calm down, because men have only a certain amount of noise and passion to expend at a given moment. M. Thiers then took up once more the words which he had spoken before the outburst of this great storm.

"It is not I," he said, "who introduced politics into a question of finance. My honourable contradicter, when speaking of the future augmentation of taxes, very involuntarily spoke also of order, and so I was obliged to speak of it too. I have committed no other crime than that of following my honourable contradicter on to ground which he had already taken up.

"I have devoted my life to the country: I regard the policy of my country as resting of necessity upon external peace and moral order, as well as upon material order. I am absolutely certain of the maintenance of material order; as to moral order, I will do what I can; but if, with 100,000 men close to this Assembly, material order can be answered for, you see plainly that mild words are not well received here. . . ." (*Murmurs from the Right.*)

M. Depeyre.—"Yes, it is plain enough! it is we who are the disorderly ones, and the men of order are over there!" (*pointing to the Left*).

These words of M. Depeyre's were intended ironically, but many well-disposed persons took and still take them literally.

Scenes like these were a mistake, such as all parties commit. They brought the Right into disrepute to some extent, and brought the Parliament into disrepute; they added to M. Thiers' toil, and for two years past he had achieved superhuman labours; they certainly diminished the authority of the Government, and would have absolutely destroyed it if the Right had been less unpopular; they entitled strangers to say that we had no Government, and that very likely we might never attain to one. This is the bad side; as for the good side, even by the Right, and from

its point of view, in the interest of its own party, it would be sought for in vain. The Right was not always so ill-inspired, as it proved by the creation of the Council of State.

The Government wished to nominate the counsellors itself. The committee, being the organ of the majority, proposed to have them nominated by the Chamber. The discussion was a very animated one; M. Gambetta, M. Bertauld, M. Bardoux, and M. Dufaure all took a considerable part in it. Their principal antagonists were M. Batbie, M. de Kerdrel, M. Giraud, a comparatively unknown deputy who proved to be a skilful debater, and M. Saint-Marc Girardin. The arguments on either side were not new; it was one of those questions on which everything has already been said. They were supported on both sides with vigour, and no doubt with sincerity. Nevertheless it must be confessed that behind all these more or less solid arguments was hidden political interest, and this it was which directed everything. The Government wished to nominate because it was itself, and the Left wished the Government to nominate because it had confidence in the Government, and distrusted the majority. A speaker belonging to the Right was much astonished to see the Left bent on strengthening the Government. The Left replied, and

with reason, that those who are most liberal desire a strong Government. The important thing is, rightly to define the limits of authority and of liberty. The province of the State ought to be restricted within what is necessary, but while remaining within these just limits, authority must be very strong; it must be so, even for the sake of liberty. It is, therefore, a foolish charge to bring against the liberals, this perpetual repetition that in virtue of their own principles they ought to approve of every proposition tending to weaken the Government. The speaker who brought this charge against the Left was not really the dupe of his own arguments. He knew very well that the Left simply wished to have Republican counsellors, and that it counted on their being given to it by the Government, whilst the counsellors nominated by the majority would, as a matter of course, reflect the opinions of the majority. And had the Right any different motives? It had wished that mayors should be elected by the municipal councils, and now it wished to have the Councillors of State nominated by Parliament; and on that ground it vaunted its liberalism, and a few easy-going Republicans asserted the liberality of the Assembly. This same majority, when it was in office, thought no longer of anything but how to turn the mayors into pliable instruments of the

central power, and that very right of nominating the Councillors of State which it had refused M. Thiers it promptly claimed for Marshal MacMahon. No reproach can be brought on this subject against either the Right or the Left: that would be to reproach them with being parties. So long as the form of Government is not finally settled, parties study their own interests in all political affairs, which is one of the most unfortunate consequences of revolutionary situations.

The law on the Council of State was debated in 1872 under the most extraordinary conditions. In the first place, we had not as yet even the Wallon Constitution, which is but the shadow of a constitution; we were only at the Rivet Constitution and the Pact of Bordeaux. No one could tell whether this Council, which was being organized at all risks, would form part of a Republican or of a Monarchical Government: that was the first anomaly. The second was this: should we have two Chambers, or only one? Who can fail to perceive of how much importance to the organization of a Council of State the answer to this question would be? The Left said, "Keep your Provisional Council until you know what you are going to be." This did not suit the Right, which was above all bent upon nominating the counsellors. "We will first of

all," they said, "construct this important piece of machinery, and when the Constitution is made, we will fit it into it somehow."

Nor is this all. It was already evident that the majority in the country was with the Left. The majority in the Chamber, on the contrary, was with the Right. This is not unfrequently the case just before a dissolution. But other Parliaments have a fixed term of office, this one had to appoint its own time of dissolution. The majority had therefore the greatest interest, first in putting off the time of dissolution; secondly, in leaving representatives of its policy behind it wherever that might be possible. Its only chance of a restoration after the dissolution was the leaving of power in friendly hands when it went out. Whoever seeks any other interpretation of the 24th May will certainly be mistaken. In 1872 we had only got so far as the Council of State. M. Bertauld said, "It is the Council of the Government, therefore it is fair that they should select it." It is likely that the Right was interesting itself about the Council on this account! It was regarded as a detached fort to be held until the citadel could be invested.

Nothing could be more curious to listen to than the arguments of M. Giraud. "Fears are entertained," he said, "of a disagreement between

the Government and the Council that shall be nominated by us, but how could that be possible? Is it not the majority in the Assembly which nominated M. Thiers and which supports his Cabinet? What surer means could be found of guaranteeing the unanimity of the Council of State and the Cabinet, than that of a common origin?" When M. Giraud spoke thus he knew that the Government of M. Thiers had not been created by the majority then before him, but by the whole Assembly and by the whole of France; he knew very well that the Cabinet had not been formed from the majority, for his friends brought forward this complaint at almost every sitting; and he knew well, in spite of the great desire of the Right to perpetuate itself, that the majority would disappear sooner than the Council which it was about to elect. These arguments failed to impose on any one. M. Thiers had demanded the nomination of the councillors by the Government; M. Dufaure had presented a bill in the same sense; and he made one of his most powerful speeches against the scheme of the election. But the majority would not be put off; and it had a Council of State made by itself and for itself.

One detail in the discussion is worth remarking. M. Dufaure referred to the Council of State of 1849, which the Assembly of that period wished

to arm against the President Louis Napoleon. "The Council of State," he said, "was created in the presence of a rival power, against which the Assembly was obliged to take measures of precaution.

"Are we in the same situation?"

"Yes, yes!" from the Right.

Eager protestations immediately arose on the Left. "Gentlemen," said M. Dufaure, "I do not disdain interruptions; they are sometimes the heedless expression of a profound thought."

The prorogation of this year, 1872, from the 3rd August till the 11th November, was a troubled period. In the first place, minor causes of disturbance were not wanting. There were strikes in the north, the Government put them down with unprecedented resolution, which cut off the evil at its root. The clergy, knowing that they were supported by the Right, caused petitions in favour of Pius IX. to be signed in all quarters, even in elementary schools and in little girls' workrooms; and they got up two kinds of pilgrimages, one to go to Rome and protest against Italy, the other and more numerous kind went to Saint-Anne, Paray-le-Monial, la Salette, and especially to Lourdes. The recent miracles had made the latter shrine very popular. This clerical campaign caused some uneasiness to Italy, which

was directly menaced by it, and to Germany, which affected to consider us as placed between two dangers, demagogy and clericalism, and which would not, she declared, endure either Communists or Jesuits at her gates. M. Thiers, in spite of Mgr. Dupanloup's impatience, obtained the adjournment of the Report on the petitions by alleging reasons of State; but he was obliged to act with the utmost discretion in regard to the pilgrimages, which were the exercise of a right, and upon which no restrictions beyond the indispensable police-regulations could be imposed. The pilgrim bands, which passed over a great extent of country, were not always on friendly ground; and at Nantes they narrowly escaped a collision. This clerical agitation, it may be remarked in passing, had some curious intermittences. It was very brisk at the close of the Government of M. Thiers. It disappeared altogether during the reaction which followed the 24th May, to revive after the general elections with the triumph of the Republic. One might almost say that its leaders are anxious about the condition of the temporal power in Rome, only when they are not allowed to pull the wires of politics in Paris. In September and October, 1872, the clerical agitation was complicated by the growing agitation of the monarchical parties.

We have told why the leaders of the Right thought that the moment was come for a decisive struggle against the Republic. Their intrigues in Parliament were accompanied by redoubled violence in the journals which they had in their pay. While the Orleanists and the Legitimists sought alliances in the political world, and anxiously interrogated the chiefs of the army, the Bonapartists, who had not yet established their power over the Royalist conservatives in the Assembly, counted above all on the mob. They could not believe that their old tricks were known to the whole gallery, and would only be received with hisses. They again tried the popular methods which had succeeded in 1851. They had their pilgrimages to Chiselhurst, their rendezvous in the churches. They held funeral services for the repose of the soul of Napoleon III., which was legitimate enough, but they turned them as much as possible into political manifestations. They wanted to have a solemn mass celebrated in the church of St. Denis, which is reserved for the obsequies of sovereigns, and they would have gained their point surreptitiously but for the decision and promptitude of M. Camille Sée, formerly Secretary-General of the Ministry of the Interior during the siege, and at that time sub-prefect of the arrondissement. Numbers of little books appeared,

imperial almanacs, and photographs; an active propaganda was carried on in the workshops: it was discovered that the party had a salaried head, a police, and semi-official agents, some of whom still belonged to the administration of the country. M. Thiers looked with uneasiness on this revival of effort. He often said that France would probably preserve the Republic, but that if she did decide for a Monarchy it would be the Empire. He enjoined vigilance upon all sides and prompt action. Severe measures were taken against certain imperialist papers, published in the departments which were still in the state of siege. Prince Napoleon, who was on his way to Corsica to take his seat as counsellor-general, and whose journey was made the opportunity for political manifestations, was brought back to the frontier. The Permanent Committee put in a protest, but to its remonstrances M. Thiers made no reply but this: "I look upon this as a question of ministerial and governmental responsibility; you will present an interpellation on the subject when the Assembly meets."

In the midst of these grave anxieties, the chief solicitude of the Government was caused by the Republicans. Up to that time they had shown it the utmost deference. During this prorogation a few of the most advanced and impatient among

them formed a resolution to celebrate the 4th September by banquets and speeches. M. Thiers was determined to oppose this. The newspapers did not fail to say that the Government was afraid of Republican manifestations; he was afraid above all of the reaction towards the Right that might be produced, and he thought that if exaggerated language was used at these gatherings, the effect would be disastrous for the Republic. Words are events in France. Popularity is gained by a word, or a word causes you to fall into irreparable disgrace; there are illustrious examples of each case.

The Government succeeded in preventing the commemoration of the 4th September, but the demonstration was shifted to the 21st, the anniversary of the proclamation of the first Republic. M. Victor Lefranc desired the prefects to prevent manifestations which were neither fitting at a time of mourning nor entirely inoffensive in view of the violence of party-feeling. A banquet at Chambéry, which professed to be private, but in which the Government discerned the features of a public gathering, was forbidden. Thereupon a strictly private soirée was got up at Grenoble, admittance being obtained by ticket only, and the Government, faithfully observing the law, took care not to oppose the slightest obstacle to that. M.

Gambetta delivered there one of those far-sounding speeches which he knows so well how to make. It was reported in all the papers. The Right professed to see socialistic and communistic declarations in it which were not there at all, but they found in every sentence a condemnation of their policy, and a demand for immediate dissolution. This was enough to account for the anger which they really felt, and which they thought it useful to exaggerate. M. Thiers himself, annoyed by the difficulties that were created for him, felt great irritation, and expressed it forcibly in the Permanent Committee.

At this moment of our contemporary history, after much marching and countermarching, the two armies had met at last, the Right against the Left: the Monarchy—the three Monarchies—against the Republic. The Right had tried to lead M. Thiers; failing in that, it had tried to gain him over; next, it had tried to frighten him. But now, perceiving that if he himself lasted he would make the Republic last, and that if the Republic lasted it would very soon become invincible, the Right wanted to overthrow M. Thiers, and as it was of one accord to destroy, though not to found, and had the majority in the Assembly, at the moment when it chose to overthrow him it could do so. It would only

leave him the necessary time for finishing the task in which nobody could take his place; on the day on which the territory should be liberated, it would, by way of recompense strike down the liberator. Republican France, perceiving this, wished to be beforehand and to drive out the majority which was preparing to drive out the Republic. The situation was therefore simple enough for everybody except the Government.

For the Government the situation was more involved than ever. An impossibility and an enigma were before them. The elections—the immediate consequence of dissolution—were the enigma: what would they produce? It was beyond all doubt that the majority in the new Chamber would be Republican. Whatever else in the way of a surprise the ballot might bring, this point was certain. But would that majority be Conservative? There was the doubt, and a serious one it was. Would it be prudent? For the sake of France and of the Republic, of our honour and the permanence of the Republic, the Constitution must be framed with prudence, with mature consideration, and in a conservative spirit. The Government could have no certainty on this point; it must take its chance. But even if it had been disposed to let the country run so great a risk, it had neither the right nor the power to take

part in a movement for dissolution. It had not the right, since it owed its existence to the Chamber. The same act that dissolved the Chamber would destroy the Government. What would the will and testament of this dying Chamber be worth? For whom should it make a will? For representatives of the opinions of its majority, but not for Republicans who had contributed to its downfall. Its testament was of no account, but it had another means of giving force to its ideas, or at the very least of causing confusion among our ranks. Long before its death it would have broken up the Government; to do this there was nothing needed but a vote. The Government of M. Thiers, thus hindered in its designs, would have succumbed. No human power could have persuaded him to go outside the due course of law. Besides, it was bound by its promise at Bordeaux, and by the declarations frequently made in the tribune and elsewhere which it had renewed during the past year. Not it therefore would preside at the elections, but a Government of the Right. For all these reasons the Government could not take part in a motion for a dissolution. Neither could it go over to the Right, because it saw that the Right was not in harmony with the majority of the country, and a more powerful, nay, an all-powerful reason,

because it was itself of opinion that the Republic ought to be formed. The fitting course was then to maintain the existing Chamber and to form a Republican majority in it determined to support M. Thiers without demanding from him any concession of principle.

This line of conduct was not only the best, it was the only one. When one thinks it over now, after an interval of five years, it seems as if nothing could have been easier. On the contrary, nothing could have been more difficult, because the Left, now so united, was very much divided then, if not in votes of importance, at any rate in the aspirations and sentiments of the different groups of which it was composed. Among its ranks were a few ultra-Republicans who were frightened by the term Conservative Republic, and who were accused, wrongfully no doubt, but owing somewhat to their own language and associates out of the House, of secret aspirations in conformity with the views of the demagogues. M. Thiers lost no opportunity of declaring that he had nothing in common with these hot-headed ultras, nothing in common with the policy which they followed, nor with the theories attributed to them. Nevertheless, he did not go so far as to repulse and provoke them, because he had need of their votes on great occasions. His object was to construct

a Republican and Conservative majority, by gaining over some votes from the Right-Centre. The object of the Right on the other hand was to force him to break at once with the extreme Left, so as to hold him prisoner. Such was the action which logical necessity imposed on M. Thiers and on his adversaries, and such in fact was the course actually followed on both sides. On the one, M. Thiers put forth his message in order to create a Conservative Republican majority. On the other, M. Changarnier put forth his interpellation in order to split the Republican party in two, and to rob the Government of its only support.

IV.

THE Message was read in the Chamber by M. Thiers himself, on Wednesday, the 13th November, two days after the opening of the session. It was only on the previous day that he had read it at the Council of Ministers. Seven Ministers out of nine heard it then for the first time. The Council approved and admired it. No objection was raised, no modification proposed. Some, however, were a little surprised. In spite of M. Thiers' repeated declarations during the period of the prorogation, and during the last month of the preceding session, they did not expect so much clearness and resolution. They perceived that he wished seriously to warn the country and the Assembly, and to make them plainly understand that our only remaining chance of safety was to accept the Republic, and to make that form of Government, finally accepted and consolidated, not only the ally, but the safeguard of all conservative principles. Despite its length, we will place before our readers the political

portion of this message, one of the most important documents of contemporary history.

"Gentlemen, we have just made you acquainted with the condition of the country, especially in its commercial and financial aspects, because they are most important to our credit; and because that credit, and our army which is being reorganized with singular promptitude, constitute the two elements of our power. Thus, after an unfortunate war, after a most terrible civil war, after the downfall of an apparently stable throne, France has found every nation eager to lend her money, and her credit is more firmly established than ever. Eight milliards have been paid off in two years, the greater part of this has been taken out of the country without disturbing the circulation, the bank-note is accepted as money, the taxes, although increased by a third, are paid without very severe distress to the tax-payer, financial equilibrium is almost established, a sinking fund of two hundred millions is formed, commerce and manufactures have increased by seven hundred millions in one year! To what are these results, which we should not venture to lay before you if they were not proofs of the vitality of the country, due? They are due to the resolute maintenance of order. (*Loud cheering from several benches.*)

"Order being established, our workshops were

reopened; men resumed work, foreign capital far from avoiding us, and French capital, far from hiding itself, has flowed in, quiet has been restored with work, and already France can raise her head, support, without forgetting, her inconsolable grief, and, what is still more surprising, a form of Government which usually disturbed her profoundly, begins to enter into her habits, ..." (*Cheers from the Left and Left-Centre.*)

A Voice from the Right.—"That is a mistake."

M. Thiers.—. . . "does not hinder her return to hope, to confidence, a confidence which she inspires in others by feeling it herself. (*Loud cheers from the Left.*)

"And, since I must inevitably approach the burning topics of the day, I say to those who for a long time have believed in a Republic as their ideal of a Government which is most in conformity with the thought, and most in accordance with the march, of modern events, I say to them: It is you, especially, who should passionately desire order" . . . . ("Yes! yes! quite right!" *on the Left. Exclamations and ironical cheers on the Right*) "for, if the Republic which has twice been tried and without success, can succeed this time, you will owe its success to order." ("That's true! Quite right!" *from the Left and Centre.*)

"Make this, then, your continual study and care! If the exercise of a particular right which belongs to a free people may disturb the country, know how to renounce it temporarily, and make a sacrifice to public security which will above all benefit the Republic. If it were possible to say that order is not of equal interest to all, I should venture to affirm that it is essentially your interest, and that when we endeavour to maintain it, we work for you more than for ourselves." (*Cheers from the Left-Centre.*)

M. de Belcastel.—"It is for France that we must work!"

M. Thiers.—"Gentlemen, events have given us the Republic, and to reascend to its sources, to discuss and appraise them, would be at present a task no less dangerous than futile. The Republic is a fact." (*A Voice on the Right.*—"No! no!")

M. le Baron Chaurand.—"We said the opposite at Bordeaux."

M. Thiers.—"I beseech all opinions to wait, and not to be in such a hurry to cry for or against.

"I proceed:—

"The Republic is a fact, it is the legal Government of the country; to wish anything else is to wish and ask for a new revolution, the most formidable of all. Do not let us waste time in proclaiming the Republic, but let us spend time in im-

pressing upon it those features which are desirable and necessary. You named a commission a few months ago; the title chosen by that commission was the Conservative Republic. Let us lay fast hold of this title, and above all endeavour that it shall be well deserved. (*Cheers.*)

"Every Government ought to be conservative, and no society could live without a conservative Government. (*Cheers from both sides.*) The Republic will be conservative, or there will be no Republic." (*Sensation.*)

M. Thiers proceeded to show how rash and wicked it would be to employ universal suffrage in founding a Republic that should be only that of a particular party. "The Republic is a contradiction in terms if, instead of being the Government of all, it is the Government of any party whatsoever. (*Great cheering from many benches.*) Thus, for instance, if you wish to represent it as the triumph of one class over another, you immediately alienate part of the country; first one part, and then the remainder. (*Hear! hear! quite true!*)

"As for me, I can only admit a Republic on the footing it ought to occupy, as the government of the nation which, having long and loyally desired to share the guidance of its destinies with an hereditary power, and being unable to do so in consequence of errors which cannot now be brought

to judgment, resolves to govern itself by itself, through its elected members, chosen wisely and in full liberty, without distinction of party, class, or origin, seeking them neither above nor below, neither to the right nor to the left, but in that clear light of public esteem, in which characters, qualities, defects, portray themselves unmistakably, and selecting them with that liberty which belongs only to order, calm, and security. (*Cheers and acclamations on the Left.*)

"The two years which have passed under your eyes, under your influence, under your control in almost complete quiet, may give us the hope of founding the conservative Republic, but only the hope; let us not forget that the smallest false step would suffice to make this hope vanish, leaving us a terrible reality." (*Movement and murmurs from the Right.*)

The Right murmured while M. Thiers was giving this wise counsel and wholesome warning to the Left. M. Thiers said the Republic could only be founded at the cost of extreme prudence; but finally he did admit that it could be established, and this it was that the Right could not endure. At the present time, when we may add to those two years which had passed in almost complete quiet, six that have passed in absolute quiet, only disturbed first by the "Fusion,"

and then on 16th May, by the aggressive action of the Right against the Republic; seeing the Republic as we see it, established and powerful, if we do not take the difference of time sufficiently into account, we may think M. Thiers' speech too cold and circumspect. It may seem that its object is less to affirm the Republic than to point out to Republicans how much reserve, moderation, and patience they will require; but, in November, 1872, the solemn declaration, that maintenance of the Republic was to be desired, and that it could only be secured by dint of prudence, made in an official message by the Chief of the Executive, and by a man of the past history and influence of M. Thiers, filled the Left with rejoicing, and the Right with indignation.

M. Thiers, towards the end of his message, touched on the great argument of the Monarchists: "Republican France, isolated and without alliances in the midst of the sovereigns of Europe! Foreign sovereigns are enlightened enough at the present time to see in France only France herself. If she be orderly, she will find friends in all; she will not only be orderly but strong, and all those who desire an even balance among the Powers of the World will be satisfied. Now I venture to affirm that the efforts which France has made within the last two years, have won for her

an esteem of which she has already received many proofs. And these proofs have not been addressed to such and such parties, or to such and such a man, but to France and France alone, and to the course of action which she is pursuing in order to repair faults which she did not indeed commit, but which she expiates because she allowed them to be committed. (*Loud and continued cheering.*)

"Yes, I make the assertion, because it is part of my duty to keep my eyes incessantly fixed on Europe. France is not isolated; on the contrary, she may if she choose be surrounded by firm and powerful friends. Let her be peaceful under the Republic, and she will frighten away no one. Let her be disturbed under a tottering Monarchy, and she will find herself as much isolated under one form of Government as under another. (*Loud cheers from the Left. Prolonged interruption.*)

"Gentlemen, we are approaching a decisive moment. The form of this Republic has only been given by events, resting upon your wisdom and on your union with the authority which you have temporarily chosen; but all minds are waiting for you; all ask themselves when . . . . (*murmurs on the Right*), what form you will choose in order to give that conservative strength which is indispensable to the Republic . . . ."

M. de la Rochefoucauld, Duc de Bissacia.—"But we do not want it!"

M. le Vicomte de Lorgeril.—"And the Pact of Bordeaux?"

M. Thiers.—"It is for you to choose one or the other. God forbid that we should substitute ourselves for you! But when you shall have determined, when you shall have chosen some from amongst you to study this most essential measure, if you should wish for our advice, we will gladly give it, loyally, and without flinching. (*Exclamations and murmurs from the Right.*) Until that time you may reckon on our profound attachment to our country, to you, to that which is so beautiful and so dear to our hearts, which has been before us, and will be after us, to France, who alone deserves all our efforts and all our sacrifices. (*Loud and continued cheering.*)

"This is a great, a decisive session which is now opening; on our part neither deference, nor co-operation, nor devotion, nor resolution, shall be wanting to complete the success of your work, which may God bless, render complete, and above all lasting, a benefit which has not yet been accorded to us since the beginning of the century." (*Loud applause and reiterated cheers from the Left and Left-Centre.*)

The report adds: "The emotion caused by the

reading of the message led to a great and general agitation in the Assembly. Most of the representatives rose, and without leaving their benches, stood in groups in animated conversation.

For more than twenty minutes the President tried in vain to restore silence.

The day before, M. Thiers had said to two of his ministers who had remained with him after the Council: "I shall have said what I think, to all parties, to France, to Europe, all that I think; that is the capital point for me, and for you. As to success . . . ." He believed in it, however, more than his two friends, who did not wish to discourage him, but who were rather pessimists in all things. As for him, he could not disabuse himself of his belief in the power of good sense. He could not believe that the men who had been attached to him, who had fought with him, under his leadership, for the parliamentary régime would abandon him in this critical struggle from motives of party-spirit and cliquism.

We have stated his object in writing this memorable message; he wished to break with the very violent radicals who compromised him; to attract to the Left-Centre the liberal and sagacious members of the Right-Centre; thus to constitute a majority more analogous to his views, with which he would be able to frustrate all

the efforts of the monarchical revolutionists. The results were not such as he had hoped for: the extreme Left did not withdraw their votes, the Right-Centre did not give theirs, the respective proportions of the different parties were not modified. The only novelty in the general situation was an increase of confidence from the Left and of hostility from the Right.

The advanced Republicans, far from being offended at the advice which had been given them, seemed to be as well satisfied as the members of the Left-Centre. M. Thiers thought that for the present they wished to see the Republic established, and that to attain this object, they consented to the temporary effacement of their ideas. There was certainly some truth in this; but at this time, perhaps, M. Thiers exaggerated to himself the differences which separated them from him. Neither the Left-Centre nor moderate Left, any more than the extreme Left, shared his views on the treaties of commerce, the tax on raw material, the length of military service, the substitution of numbers, the nomination of mayors in large centres by the Government; on the other hand the extreme Left had not the demagogic ideas which the Right made use of as scarecrows, and which were attributed to them at that time by the other groups of the Left, the Government, and M. Thiers

himself. The old Republicans whom he had with him, had often warned him not to take too seriously a certain vehemence of language, characteristic of the constitution of that party and to the position of its speakers, and from which demagogic and socialistic doctrines could only be extracted by perverting their real meaning. He had fought too long against Republicans not to be inclined to fear their pass words, songs, and symbols, which reminded him of a gloomy past, but which those who made use of them, very inopportunely, quite seriously regarded as glorious recollections. Besides, he personally exercised an influence on the most ardent Republicans which he did not then take into account, though he perceived it more clearly after his fall, and of which some of his friends who were on intimate terms with the party without belonging to it, were aware. These friends then rendered the Republic one of those services for which one is never rewarded except by one's conscience, by making it possible for persons to work in harmony together, who had different temperaments but analogous ideas. Without any doubt, if the separation had taken place, discussion with the Right would have become easier; but this was a small advantage at a time when, war being declared, there was nothing for it but a great muster of forces; and on the other hand

they would have lost a considerable amount of support. Not only did those adherents remain firm to M. Thiers up to May 24th, but the Left associated with each other on terms of good understanding, making reciprocal concessions, and thus creating such unity and discipline as enabled them to struggle against the reaction and to attain the proclamation of the Republic. M. Thiers was all the more able to accept the votes of the extreme Left, in that he had not bought them by any concession, either in word or deed.

In order to break up this union of the Left, which was becoming a great source of strength for the Republic, and of danger to the Monarchy, the Right had recourse to two expedients, the Kerdrel proposition and Changarnier's interpellation.

The Kerdrel proposition came up in a mild and modest form, something like a claim to the right of making an answer to the speech from the throne. In reality its object was to protest against M. Thiers' language, and it blossomed forth, after several transformations, into the bill on the relations of the Public Authorities (*Rapports des pouvoirs publics*). We shall meet with it again under this form.

The Changarnier interpellation went more

directly, but less surely, to the mark. It took place 18th November, a few days after the reading of the message.

General Changarnier was one of the most remarkable members of the Right. He was more than eighty, and perhaps in weak health, but one had to look closely to perceive that. His will supplied any deficiency of physical strength. He was assiduous in his attendance at the Chamber, at the meetings of his party, in the bureaux, at the committees, and he was always ready to ascend the tribune and make an extremely short speech, well turned, and generally provoking, for no kind of daring was wanting in him. His age, his military services, his violent hatred of the Republic, which he called radicalism, gave him an influential position in his party. He had been one of the bravest of our African army, which consisted only of brave men. After Bugeaud, he was one of our best tacticians. He came to Paris in 1848, and was general of the army of order, in the streets, and one of its champions in the Chamber. At this time he achieved unequalled popularity with his own party, and unequalled unpopularity with the other. He might have joined in the Coup d'État and become one of the most powerful nobles of the empire; he preferred to be proscribed by it. He lived humbly, austerely,

nobly, in exile at Malines. The Pope offered him the command of his army, but he refused. He did not unsheath his sword until Metz, where he shut himself up and fought under one of his old lieutenants for his expiring country. Having returned to France and been elected deputy, all his old hatred for the Republic revived, and he showed it in word and deed. He turned, without hesitating a minute, against M. Thiers, who had been his idol, because M. Thiers was for the Republic. He was as stubborn and as obtuse as M. Thiers was intelligent; in addition to all this, a scholar, knowing Latin and loving the classics: he had entertained the double ambition to be an academician and a marshal of France. He would have been a swaggerer had he not been a valiant soldier, and a good general, and had he not remained poor, and lived simply, a fact greatly to his honour in the positions he had held. In his interpellation he was more humourous than he intended to be.

He recapitulated all the abuse that had been heaped on M. Gambetta's speech at Grenoble. According to him M. Gambetta had grossly insulted the National Assembly; he had outraged religion; he had disturbed honest workmen, shopkeepers, and proprietors; excited malignant passions, envious passions, in the breasts of

those men whose cupidity is greater than their intrinsic value. Such, in short, was the general's indictment. He praised M. de Cissey much for having punished five young scatterbrains, five youths who had allowed themselves, he said, the unhealthy distraction of listening to and applauding the vulgar demagogue. "I have the misfortune not to admire M. Gambetta's noisy eloquence; I should have long ago forgotten this prose, if I had not been forced to recognize that it has done much harm.

"The ardour of my patriotism imperatively compels me to beg, to entreat the President of the Republic, whom I have so loved, whom I love still . . . . (*excitement*), to unite himself with the majority of the Assembly, and fight against the growing audacity of radicalism."

The end of the speech is unequalled. "Will not the Government think that the time has now come to separate itself frankly, openly, and resolutely from a factious person . . . ." (*Murmurs from the Left; cheers from the Centre and Right.*)

The President.—"General, I must beg that you will not apply expressions to one of your colleagues which are forbidden by parliamentary rules and usages." (*Cheers from the Left; murmurs from the Right.*)

M. le Comte de Rességuier.—"You are defending the Assembly! Speak!"

M. Fresneau.—"The Assembly has been insulted, and the General is defending it!"

The President.—"No one, I think, can wish expressions to be used at this tribune which would lead to this ceasing to be a parliamentary debate." (*Hear! hear!*)

General Changarnier.—"I should be sorry to annoy the President, who not only has our confidence but our affection. (*Hear! hear! on the Right.*) He does not approve, yet I am speaking very correct French! .... (*cheers and laughter on the Right*) which clearly expresses my opinion, and that of the majority of this Assembly. (*Yes! yes! from the Right.*) In order to please him I will alter my phrase. I entreat the Government, for whom I have great respect, to recognize that now is their time to unite themselves to the majority, in order to fight against a colleague .... (*Turning to the President*) Is M. le Président satisfied?"

The President.—"I am always satisfied when the speakers keep within parliamentary bounds. (*Hear! hear!*) It is my duty to maintain those, and I only asked the honourable general to have the goodness to respect them." (*Cheers.*)

General Changarnier.—"Will the Government

not recognize that the time has come for it to separate itself frankly and openly from a colleague who is disposed to overthrow everything, in order again to institute a disastrous dictatorship, whose return would be the death-knell of France." (*Loud cheers from the Right and Right-Centre. General Changarnier, on returning to his seat, is received with a fresh burst of applause, and heartily congratulated by his colleagues of the Right and Centre.*)

M. Victor Lefranc, Minister for the Interior, replied with much firmness. The Government had done all that the most exacting persons could expect of it, for the maintenance of order and the defence of the Assembly. The minister proceeded to prove this indisputably. All manifestations, all meetings, with the exception of that one at Grenoble, had been stopped; that had been only a private meeting, and in such a case the Government was powerless. M. Thiers had explained this before the Permanent Committee, and M. Victor Lefranc repeated his words. "What would be said if a large landed proprietor invited five or six hundred friends to his house, to discuss his legitimate aspirations with them, and the Government interfered?" These were M. Thiers' words, and M. de Broglie, speaking after him at the Permanent Committee, had answered that the

Government's condemnation of the demonstrations for a dissolution had been energetic and unmistakable, and that the conservative party had nothing more to ask of it. M. Victor Lefranc's speech was unanswerable, and ought, in justice, to have terminated the discussion.

But that did not suit the Right. They wanted a scene, and in order to obtain it they constrained M. Thiers to repeat in the tribune what he had said before the Committee. "It is true that you have said it, but you must ascend those four steps and repeat those same words with your most distinct utterance." They not only demanded the phrase which M. Victor Lefranc had already read word for word, they wanted the accent and gestures which accompanied them. And let M. Thiers take care to change nothing.

It was M. de Broglie who undertook to express this demand. He did not retract his late approbation.

"M. Thiers' words," he said, "were spoken with wonderful energy. But a cold and silent official report could not render a just idea of the effect of them. What we have wished, and what we still wish, is that this effect, which was confined to the four walls of one of the rooms of this building, that this effect, which was witnessed by

only a small number of us, should be seen, heard, and felt by the whole of France. This is what we earnestly, anxiously ask of the President of the Republic."

What more could they have done if M. Thiers had made a retractation since the meeting of the Committee? if he had wavered? if he had had an interview with M. Gambetta? Not only had nothing of the kind taken place, but M. Thiers' words had just been read aloud to the Assembly, without any alteration, with his full consent, and very probably by his own desire. But before the Right could be satisfied, they must hear M. Thiers repeat his own words. "We only ask that," said M. de Broglie, "but we ask it most earnestly."

M. Thiers felt the indignity of the proceeding very acutely. He ascended the tribune, and we must here remind our readers that the speech which he made from it was interrupted at every sentence.

"I admit that it is with the greatest pain that I find myself at this tribune, after two years of entire and absolute devotion, treated like a man who may be justly distrusted. . . . Was I undecided before the walls of Paris? Was I undecided when I suppressed the strikes? . . . I say that you do me a grievous wrong when you summon me here to make a confession of faith,

when forty years of my life have furnished ample proof of it. . . . You wish to force me into the position of a witness under cross-examination; I will not accept it!

"Let us be frank; it is not the Grenoble incident which has given rise to this agitation.

"I have lived for two years with an overpowering burden weighing upon me, and I have told myself that I had no right through any sensitiveness of mine, to bring about a most critical situation for this country; but when you appear to doubt me, you give me the right to call for a vote of confidence." (*Cheers from the Left.*) You have given me the right, and I demand it. (*That's right! and cheers from the Left.*) I demand it now.

"If you want a decided Government, you must be decided yourselves. Well, be decided with regard to us. You complain of a provisional Government, appoint a definitive Government. Bring your Government here! I resign joyfully, with anxiety for my country indeed, but as far as I am concerned, I would willingly resign my post to those who could show more decision of character than we have shown, and acts more efficacious for the country than ours during the last two years: in short, a Government which could be termed definitive, and which France

would accept!" (*Cheers and prolonged applause from the Left and extreme Left.*)

M. Thiers was completely victorious that day. The Right tried every means in its power, but it only proved that it was not yet ready. However, it became so soon after.

The following months, up to 24th May, were occupied with the results of the Kerdrel proposition. Very important questions were discussed, and the most important of all was that of the organization of Councils of Public Education; but all the interest centred in the contest between M. Thiers and the majority. All beside was mere hair-splitting; they only wanted to overthrow M. Thiers, and their eventual success was no longer problematic; every one knew that M. Thiers would be beaten in the Assembly and victorious in the country. The politics of those four last months have only the interest of a play, of which one knows the *dénouement* beforehand.

Several debates were very exciting. On 28th November, M. Dufaure discussed the proposition of the Kerdrel Commission. The Commission proposed "a bill on ministerial responsibility." But every one knows what this bill meant. M. Dufaure said with his accustomed precision,—

"In asking you for a law on ministerial respon-

sibility, you are in reality asked to furnish the means of forbidding the President of the Republic to ascend the tribune!" Here is his opinion of this proposal: "I shall only add one word. As I said at the beginning, we must answer the message. The nation has received the message with great esteem (*Hear! hear! and loud cheers from the Left*); and foreign countries have been deeply impressed by the nobility of the language held by the Chief of the Executive in France, after the unheard-of misfortunes which have laid waste our country, after the great reawakening that has come to it in the last eighteen months; . . . (*applause.*) That message will doubtless occupy a certain position in history; and I would ask you, now, gentlemen, whether, if in answer to that message you reply, A commission shall discover means by which M. Thiers shall be prevented from ascending the tribune of the Assembly,—will your answer meet with the same reception?"

M. Dufaure proposed as an amendment a bill on the respective relations of the public authorities (*Rapports des pouvoirs publics*). M. Thiers wished to speak on his own behalf. He had some difficulty in obtaining an adjournment of the debate to the following day. On 29th November he made one of his finest speeches. It was the history of his thoughts, the history of his life.

"Pray understand that I do not come here to make a profession of faith, I have no need to do so; I come to remind those who are listening to me why it is that such questions should never have been addressed to me."

He had, in truth, little difficulty in proving that he had been a conservative all his life, without a moment's vacillation, from the commencement of his political career up to the time at which he was speaking; that no one had been more faithful to the conservative cause, or had more courageously and more efficaciously defended it. He did not attack his adversaries, but while he was speaking every one was comparing the political life of the last few months, distinguished by unimportant intrigues and speeches, to those forty years of struggle, of courage of every kind, of vigorous action, of unlimited devotion, of ceaseless toil. The contrast was too overwhelming! He was too fully avenged!

He went on to speak of the Monarchy.

"If I believed a Monarchy to be possible, I would retire, I would let you work your will; I should have fulfilled my engagement, I should remain a man of honour, and I should see my country fulfil what you call its destiny.

"Stop me this moment if you believe that it is the country's interest to have a Monarchy now;

assume power, let me descend from the tribune; I will not dispute it with you. (*Cheers and applause repeated three times from the Left and Left-Centre.*)

"Gentlemen, I am an old disciple of the Monarchy, I am what is called a Monarchist, but I practise the Republic for two reasons: because I have given my word, and because at the present time, practically, there is nothing else to be done. That is the sort of Republican I am; and I give myself out for what I am, I deceive no one.

"Well, this ambiguity will soon be at an end. You ask me why I am applauded. That is the reason! (*Loud cheers from the Left and Left-Centre.*)

"I am applauded because I am very clear on this point: there is at the present time no Government possible for France except that of the conservative Republic."

The whole Chamber, even M. Thiers' enemies, were profoundly moved, when, before leaving the tribune, he solemnly uttered the following words,—

"I swear before you, before God, that for two years I have served my country with unbounded devotedness."

M. Dufaure's proposition was passed by 372 votes against 335. The Chamber appointed a com-

mission of thirty members, the famous Committee of Thirty, with M. de Broglie as reporter. They set to work with great hostility to the Government; although later on they fell into more harmony with it; a very important speech made by M. Dufaure on December 14th, in which radical doctrines were repudiated and condemned, largely conduced to this result, and there was even some talk of a reconciliation. Already, in the lobbies, every one was beginning to ask; "who is being deceived?" when the news arrived that nothing of the sort had taken place, and that the struggle would be *à outrance*. The sceptical members of the committee good-humouredly laughed at themselves, and their colleagues. But after all were we playing like children? The problem which had been set before the committee was to draw up a constitution which should not be one. As nothing serious could come of this, and as by prolonging equivocations and subterfuges, they were simply making themselves ridiculous, they were compelled to decide upon the following compromise. First, that M. Thiers should consent to speak in future only after certain formalities. He was to give notice of his intention the day before; if he should happen to want to speak on the same day, a vote would be necessary to empower him to do so. On the

day fixed, he was to come to the Chamber,—for he was not to have admission on ordinary occasions, —then make his speech and withdraw. The Chamber also would adjourn. He was not to be answered until the next day. Thus he might still address them, but he could not debate. They hoped that these formalities, all this waste of time, and the suppression of discussion would make him take a dislike to the tribune. This for the Right would be a great relief. To impose silence on M. Thiers was like taking his sword from a general. In exchange they conferred on him two important rights: that of retarding for a few days the promulgation of laws, and even of demanding, that is to say, of exacting by a message, a fresh deliberation. This choice collection of calculations was nicknamed by the public *Chinoiseries*, a sobriquet which it fully deserved. The last clause resolved, that after the dissolution, the Assembly should be replaced by a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate. Such was the collection of incoherent stipulations brought up to the tribune. The committee, and the Government, neither being charmed with their joint production, resolved to shorten the debate as much as possible. But they were unable to do so. M. Gambetta and M. Louis Blanc entered the lists; M. de Broglie and M. Dufaure were the

two champions. M. Thiers, who would have preferred to remain silent on this occasion, was obliged to ascend the tribune.

The only person who took the debate easily was M. Gambetta. He denied that the Assembly had power to constitute; but if it wished to constitute, at least let it do something sensible, and it might continue to exist. It wanted to make authority which had attached itself to the Republic work together with a majority which was resolved to oppose the Republic; all the *Chinoiseries* in the world would not enable them to realize such a chimera. There was only one course to be taken, the one pointed out by reason, and demanded by France; to abdicate at once, and into the hands of one single Assembly.

This argument was powerful, but it was only an opposition theme; that the majority would not dissolve, every one knew beforehand. The state of the negotiations with Germany was one unanswerable objection to an immediate dissolution. Many of the clearest heads were afraid of a new and single Assembly, armed with constituent powers and elected under radical influences. Several amendments were made by Right and Left, for in reality the bill was worthless; but the force of circumstances had its way, and as was to be expected, the Assembly adopted in its entirety

a bill which settled nothing, and just because it settled nothing.

M. Thiers and M. Dufaure had been present at most of the latter sittings of the Committee; one might say that they had co-operated with it. The Council was, on its part, kept informed by M. Thiers of the proposals which were made in the Committee. All the Ministers were unanimous in considering a Senate a very important object to be attained. The right of demanding a fresh deliberation was admitted only after an animated discussion, and as expedient until the two Chambers should be constituted. Some months before, M. Thiers would have fiercely resented the proposal that he should no longer speak from the tribune: he knew his own strength, he somewhat disdained that of others, and this man of order loved to brave parliamentary storms; pretty much like the old sailor who prays to heaven for a calm sea, but who feels glad in spite of himself when his prayer is not answered. But his only thought in February, 1873, was to complete the liberation of the territory. This great object completely absorbed him and made him agree to everything. "I need not think about anything else," he said, "for as soon as the convention is signed, the majority will declare by a finely-phrased decree, that I have 'deserved well of the country,' and will

turn me off." He resigned himself to this, not indeed without some disdain for mankind, and he even wished it. It was not an abdication. He did not think the Assembly could survive him, and after that there was a whole future.

Such was the spirit in which M. Thiers and the Government accepted the bill of the Thirty. As for the Right, who found themselves within sight of their goal without having quite reached it, they resorted to the following expedient in order to get over the last days. The great chiefs let two or three honest people, who were not in the secret, make an outcry. Three principal reasons constrained them to a delay: M. Grévy's presence in the chair, the popularity of the Government, and last, to do them justice, the fear of compromising the final negotiations.

On the evening of the 16th, the public learnt that the date of the final liberation of the territory was fixed. A thrill of joy, mingled with the anxiety of a last uncertainty, ran through the whole of France. On the 17th, just after the commencement of the sitting, M. Christophle had ascended the tribune, and was preparing to speak, when M. de Rémusat came into the Chamber.

M. de Rémusat, Minister for Foreign Affairs.—I beg to be allowed to speak (*Repeated cheers from all the benches*).

The President.—"The Minister for Foreign Affairs will address the Assembly."

M. Christophle leaves the tribune, and M. de Rémusat takes his place. His appearance in the tribune is received with several rounds of cheers, after which profound silence ensues.

M. de Rémusat.—"Gentlemen, I am charged by the President of the Republic to make a communication to you which we much regret not having been able to make at the last sitting; but we only learnt after the Assembly had separated, the good tidings which otherwise we should have imparted, and which it had a right to know first in all France.

"The Assembly now knows, that the day before yesterday, a treaty was signed at Berlin between the Ambassador of the French Republic and Prince Bismarck, a treaty which secures the evacuation of French territory. According to the terms of this treaty, the four departments which are still occupied, and the territory round Belfort, will be evacuated by the German troops on the 5th of July. (*Prolonged applause.*)

"This operation will be completed within a month from the 5th July. Nevertheless, the town of Verdun, and its military territory, will continue to be occupied until the whole of the war indemnity has been paid. But, on the 5th September,

the last payment will be made, and within a fortnight from that day, the town of Verdun and its territory will be evacuated. (*Great applause.*)

"Thus, gentlemen, by the middle of September at the latest, French territory will be free, and France will re-enter into full possession of herself." (*Acclamations from all sides.*)

The Left.—"Vive la République!"

The Right.—"Vive la France!"

We should like to stop at this great scene, and the noble sentiments which it inspires. The Chamber should have voted, without circumlocution that M. Thiers had "deserved well of the country." It should have associated with him in this vote that great patriot, of rare and profound mind, who by the lucidity of his counsels, by the assiduity of his endeavours, by the reliability and charm of his manners, had so much facilitated M. Thiers's task. Lastly, to do justice to all, it should have called forth from his retirement the colleague of those early days which were so unhappy. The formula might have been very simple: "France hereby declares that M. Thiers has deserved well of the country. She declares that M. de Rémusat and M. Jules Favre have deserved well of the country." The ancients, who knew how to bestow rewards, would have decreed

M. Thiers, by a vote, the title of "Liberator of the Territory." France and history have since done so. The share of the Government was that it had seconded M. Thiers in his work of pacification and internal restoration; that of the Chamber that it had ratified the treaties prepared by M. Thiers and voted the loans so skilfully and splendidly carried out by him.

M. Albert Christophle ascended the tribune after M. de Rémusat, and proposed the following resolution:—

"The National Assembly declares that M. Thiers, President of the Republic, has deserved well of the country."

The Left and Left-Centre responded to this proposition by unanimous acclamation.

M. le Duc de Marmier, in the midst of the noise.—"M. Christophle speaks in the name of 550 members!"

M. Saint-Marc Giradin at the tribune.—"With the same sentiment, . . . (*The vote! the vote! Speak! speak!*)

"With the same sentiment, and deputed by 300 members of this Assembly to express their opinion on the great act which has just been achieved, I ask permission to read the following motion:—

"Receiving with patriotic satisfaction the com-

munication which has just been made, and happy at having thus accomplished an essential part of its task. (*Exclamations from the Left—Yes! yes! Prolonged applause from the Right and Right-Centre.*)

M. Saint-Marc Girardin. . . . "The National Assembly presents its thanks as well as those of the country to M. Thiers, the President of the Republic, and to the Government." (*Applause from the Right and the Right-Centre.*)

M. de Belcastel.—"Gentlemen, the patriotic sentiment is universal. (*Yes! yes! and general consent.*) Only one word is wanting, and I ask for its insertion in the motion brought forward by M. Saint-Marc Girardin; it is this: 'Thanks to the generous co-operation of the country.'"

M. Horace de Choiseul.—"I claim priority for M. Christophle's resolution. An Assembly does honour to itself in boldly taking up the burden of gratitude . . ."

Protestations, it is unnecessary to say, arose from every side. "Gratitude is no burden to generous minds," cried M. de Kerdrel, "it is the most refined of all the sentiments of which the human heart is capable." (*Loud interruptions on the Left.*)

M. Larrieu.—"Exhibit it then!"

M. de Mahy.—"Express it purely and simply, don't haggle over it."

"The Government," said M. de Kerdrel, "has accomplished a great feat . . ."

"Say that M. Thiers has accomplished a great feat," cried M. Jules Simon, interrupting him.

"The Government," pursued M. de Kerdrel, "has accomplished a great feat, the greatest it ever accomplished. Thanks, it is true, to its patriotism, and the talent displayed in its negotiations; but thanks also to peace which has been restored throughout the country, and surely, we may be permitted to attribute that peace in great part to the National Assembly. (*Cheers on the Right; noise on the Left.*)

M. Gaslonde.—"And to the country which paid the ransom."

M. Eugène Pelleton.—"Your only thought has been to overthrow M. Thiers."

It was agreed that to the formula of Saint-Marc Girardin, supplemented by M. Belcastel, should be added the following words proposed by M. Wallon: "and declares that he has deserved well of the country." The motion was put to the vote in clauses.

M. Grévy proceeded to put the first clause:—

"The National Assembly, welcoming with

patriotic satisfaction the communication just made to it;"—

(Adopted.)

M. Grévy.—"Now the second paragraph.

"And happy to have thus accomplished a second part of its task, thanks to the generous support of the country;"—

(The clause is put to the vote by show of hands.)

Several members of the Right, turning towards the Left.—"Oh! oh! you don't vote that!" (*Cheers and counter-cheers.*)

(On the second vote the clause is adopted.)

M. Grévy.—"Tenders its thanks and those of the country to M. Thiers, President of the Republic, and to the Government."

(Adopted.)

M. de Belcastel.—"I want to say a few words on the additional paragraph."

M. Grévy.—"No, the discussion is closed, you cannot speak."

Now came M. Wallon's additional clause:—

"And declares that M. Thiers has deserved well of the country."

M. de Belcastel.—"Therein! add at least therein!" (*Noise.*)

(The clause is put to the vote.)

Several members of the Left, turning towards the

Right.—"Oh! oh! so then you don't vote that!" (*Cheers and counter-cheers.*)

On a second vote the clause is put and adopted in its entirety.

M. Grévy.—"I propose that the Assembly should order that the resolution now adopted be conveyed to the President of the Republic by a deputation of the bureau." (*Loud cheers on the Left; murmurs on the Right.*)

Court Rampon moves the adjournment of the debate.

A member of the Right.—"Three-quarters of an hour of apotheosis! Surely that is enough!"

The next day, at the Cabinet Council, while talking over the various incidents, M. Jules Simon said, laughing, to M. Thiers, "Now you may say your *Nunc dimittis.*"

M. Thiers, looking at him thoughtfully.—"But they have nobody."

M. Jules Simon.—"They have Marshal Mac Mahon."

M. Thiers energetically.—"Oh, as for him, I can answer for him; he will never accept."

M. Grévy's presence in the chair was a source of great annoyance to the Right. There was no hope of either gaining him over, deceiving him, or braving him. He was a Republican of long standing, with fixed ideas and inflexible resolu-

tion, which he maintained under a calm exterior. He always knew where he was and whither he was going; he had never acted from bravado in his life, never drawn back, nor even blundered from heedlessness. Under Louis-Philippe, under the first Republic, under the Empire, at the bar, in the Chamber, in the debates, in the committees, in all his conversations everywhere, he was always the same. Though faithful to his friends he was still more faithful to his ideas, which is one of the rarest qualities in politics. He seemed absolutely without ambition; or at any rate if he had any, it was evident that he would never take a step out of his way in order to attain it. He was born to be a President, for he took in a situation quickly, sagaciously, surely, and never lost his head. We must go back to the days of Roger Collard to find a President with so much authority and dignity. He was known to be extremely sensitive, and it was on that point the Right attacked him. The occasion was an unimportant one, but it was seized with too much avidity and used too skilfully to have been the mere result of chance. If the attack on that day was not premeditated, at least it had been determined to sting him into resigning.

Who would have believed that a pretext would have been furnished by M. Le Royer, a born

orator, who attacks opinions mercilessly indeed, but who, perfectly master of his speech, always treats his opponents with the utmost personal courtesy. He was in the tribune weightily discussing a non-political bill. "I now come," he said, "to the question of what has been added by the reporter to the lumber of this report." That was all. It was this word "lumber" which raised such a tempest; he said lumber as he would have said "farrago." "I have spoken of the more important matters, I now come to this farrago, to this lumber, to these trifles." Is the word disrespectful? One constantly uses such expressions without outraging the conventionalities. Who that is accustomed to speak at the bar, or from the tribune, will deny this. M. De Rainneville had only a moment before interrupted a speaker by saying, "That's all stereotype!" ("*En voilà des clichés!*") This expression was suitable neither to an Assembly nor to a drawing-room; but though it was as rude as it was vulgar, it would have been ridiculous to take offence at it. M. Le Royer did not think of such a thing. He knew also that M. de Rainneville was not in the habit of saying rude things; that he had forgotten himself; and so, in his turn, M. Le Royer brought out his "lumber" just as thoughtlessly.

A cry was raised: "Order! order! The word 'lumber' is not parliamentary; withdraw the expression!"

M. Le Royer was very justly surprised; and on reading these details after a lapse of time, one can hardly help laughing, if even this scene had been made by novices! But the most active objector was the old Marquis de Grammont, who certainly had heard much stronger expressions during his life, and who for thirty years had sat quietly in his seat, without even thinking of getting up. On this day, for a wonder, he could not restrain himself. "But," answered M. Le Royer, "I am in the habit of being polite (which was true), I will show you that there is no insult intended in the use of this word 'lumber.' At least, I have no intention of insulting or hurting any one's feelings. I am sure that the committee agrees with me." And several members of the Committee hastened to answer "Certainly." Thereupon the Marquis de Grammont cried, "That is an impertinence."

The President called him to order. How could he have avoided doing otherwise?

Violent exclamations were raised at this call to order. Several members of the Right rose, saying, "We protest against this," and seemed in-

clined to leave the Chamber; others cried that the affirmations of the reporter were interrupted by the Left and called calumnies. The President replied that he had not heard the word "calumny," and that if he had heard it he would have called the speaker to order. The point now at issue was the word 'lumber,' and not the word "calumny;" M. Le Royer, and not an interrupter whose name even was not known. It was especially a question of the word "impertinence;" and the President asked whether M. de Grammont withdrew it. "That word," said M. de Grammont, "was not a personality. I honour the person of M. Le Royer, whom I do not even know; I will even say, if he particularly wishes it, that I venerate it, for that is all one to me; and I add that when he shall have retracted his unseemly word 'lumber,' I will withdraw mine." The Right applauded this vociferously.

M. Grévy.—"When M. de Grammont, after standing up several times, taking no heed of my reproofs, and insisting on interrupting the speaker, ended by addressing to him the expression which you have just heard him make use of, it seemed to me impossible not to call him to order.

"Now, my conduct does not appear to meet with your approval; judging from the hostile

manifestations of a part of the Assembly, it seems even to be severely blamed.

"Gentlemen, if you think that I do not fulfil my duties properly, you must make me aware of the fact. I have neither asked nor sought for the office which you have conferred upon me. . . . ." (*Fresh cheers from the Left and Left-Centre.*)

M. de la Borderie.—"Those cheers are perfectly natural."

M. Grévy. . . . "I have always filled it to the best of my ability with perfect justice and impartiality (*hear, hear!*). Since I do not receive from you, gentlemen, that justice to which I feel I am entitled, I shall know what remains for me to do." (*Loud applause from the Left and Left-Centre—prolonged uproar. The Assembly breaks up in great excitement.*)

The next day M. Grévy sent in his resignation with a short note.

"M. LE VICE-PRÉSIDENT,

"I beg you to have the goodness to convey to the National Assembly, my resignation of the functions of President.

"Accept, M. le Vice-Président,

"My assurances, &c.,

"JULES GRÉVY."

He was re-elected forthwith by 349 against

231 who voted for M. Buffet. But the next day, 3rd April, he wrote again:—"The reasons which have determined me in my resignation of the presidency do not admit of my changing my resolution, I must still maintain it. I heartily thank those of my colleagues who at the sitting yesterday gave me a fresh mark of esteem and sympathy, of which I am deeply sensible. I beg you to accept," &c. . . . . M. Buffet was elected president at the sitting held on April 4th by 304 votes. The Left had voted for a name honoured and respected by all, that of M. Martel, who obtained 285 votes.

The Chamber adjourned from 8th April to 19th May, leaving behind it a Permanent Committee composed of twenty-five members, of whom eight belonged to the Left. During this prorogation M. Barodet was elected in Paris, 27th April, against M. de Rémusat.

This election was the last blow to the Government, because it was concluded from it, though wrongly, that it had ceased to be popular. The candidature was offered to M. de Rémusat by an important part of the electors of Paris. M. Thiers at once showed his willingness to accept him, and it is certain that his success would have been a master-stroke. M. de Rémusat was inclined to refuse; he ended by accepting, but it

was against his own wish and out of deference to his colleagues. Only M. Jules Simon was strongly opposed to this candidature. "Whatever you may do," he said, "they will accuse you of making an official candidate. Success is more than doubtful. They talk of proposing M. Barodet; he is a very formidable competitor. The more so that no one dreams of comparing him to M. de Rémusat. With the masses he will represent the democratic Republic, and M. de Rémusat the bourgeois, therefore the moderate, or more than moderate, the reactionary Republic. The law which has just suppressed the great Lyons Municipality, a law supported by M. de Goulard against the express wish of a part of the Cabinet, will increase M. Barodet's chances, who was mayor of Lyons, or rather insure his success. Paris will vote against the law in electing M. Barodet." M. de Goulard treated these objections very scornfully. He had been, ever since his entry into the Cabinet as Minister of Interior, at continual variance with M. Jules Simon, and wished to draw M. Thiers to the Right. M. Thiers persisted in desiring this candidature, but for motives very different from M. de Goulard's. He considered M. de Rémusat the greatest political man in the country, and would not admit that Paris could vote against the Minister who had just signed the

treaty for the liberation of the territory. But Paris is not easily turned away from the passion of the moment. It gave 180,045 votes to M. Barodet, to M. de Rémusat only 140,000. This was a most serious blow to the Government. The electors of M. Barodet in reality elected Marshal MacMahon, though at that time they had little notion of such a thing. Universal suffrage is more intelligent now.

By the side of these great events we must mention a slight incident, which did not deserve the fuss made about it, but which nevertheless was turned to account by the reaction.

M. Jules Simon, Minister of Public Instruction, opened the general meeting of the delegates of the learned societies at the Sorbonne, 19th April. On that occasion he made a long speech, in which he spoke of the requirements of science, of what it had achieved, and especially of what his successor must do in aid of it. He finished with these words:—

"Let us all exert ourselves; the time is propitious, and the necessity urgent.

"At length our country, which has suffered so much, is returning to life! It will soon be delivered from the last vestiges of foreign occupation. To whom shall we owe this deliverance? To one single man (*loud cheers*),

yes, to him alone. I tell you as an eye-witness, I who have seen his efforts in the midst of the ceaselessly recurring difficulties which were created for him by party strife. He who has done this great deed is a scholar, a *savant*, one of yourselves, gentlemen: you have a right to be proud that the liberation of the territory, and the establishment of the Republic, are due to him. . . . ."

The numerous assembly, composed of the most distinguished *savants* in the country, greeted this sentence with applause. We venture to say that those who read it now, after an interval of some years, will find in it only the simple and natural expression of an incontestable truth. And yet it excited, in the majority, indignation which now seems so little justified, that it is impossible, however much one may wish it, not to think it ridiculous.

The majority wished, at all costs, to secure for itself the principal honour of the liberation of the territory. M. Thiers had only been their agent, and had had no other merit than that of faithfully carrying out the instructions which they gave him. Unhappily for this exorbitant claim, M. Thiers had for two years been absolute chief of the Government of the State; he had, in person, assumed the direction of the war, of diplomacy

and of all the internal affairs of the country. He had himself conducted with a high hand, and sometimes harshly, the deliberations of the Chamber. The day after his nomination he had left Bordeaux with M. Jules Favre to go to Count Bismarck; and from that day forth he had worked night and day to conclude peace, to stave off all occasions of quarrel, to gather together the means of paying the five milliards for the indemnity, and the three milliards for expenses of all kinds, to hasten the time first agreed upon for the evacuation, without resting, without a moment's respite from overwhelming anxieties, exhibiting consummate knowledge of business, the shrewdness of a diplomatist, the firmness of a patriot, the courage of a citizen, often concealing his fears from his most trusted intimates, and gaining ground inch by inch, until at last he could say to France "No, not in 1875, but in this year, within a few months, we shall be free!" What had the Assembly to do with all this? What could it do?

When a treaty had been long and laboriously debated, in profound and necessary secrecy, it voted it. What it might have done besides was to render the task of negotiator and pacificator more easy, by quiet and confidence. Instead of that, it stirred up fresh quarrels

daily. This is what was said by contemporary France, and recorded by history.

But, it may be said, if M. Thiers conducted negotiations, foresaw danger, repaired errors, realized loans, made payments, and if he did all this, as must be admitted, in the midst of the incessant strife which the majority kept up, sometimes on the most frivolous pretexts, the majority at least maintained tranquillity in the country, and in that way helped him in his labours.

Did the majority do anything of the kind? Did it not repeat every day that we had no Government, that the Republic was only provisional, and multiply interpellations, the results of which might be to destroy the Government? Did it not manifest hostility amounting to passion against the large towns, and especially against Paris? Did it not select a time when unity of action was essential to recommend every measure of decentralization: the suppression of sub-prefects, the election of mayors, the impunity of the press, measures which might be excellent in themselves, but which were inopportune, and which it hastened to forget when it came into power at a moment which was more propitious to liberty? Was it the Assembly who reorganized and filled up the cadres of the army, who

found generals for it, and directed their operations? History will not reproach the Assembly with not having done that which was not for it to do, which it could not do, but history will reproach it with being wanting in justice and gratitude to the great citizen who saved it. The chief object of the majority, after the welfare of the country—for we cannot, we must not, deny that it was patriotic—was to prevent the establishment of the Republic, and it is but too true that party intrigues more than once endangered the only task to which in those terrible years all good citizens should have devoted themselves.

M. Jules Simon had then committed the crime of saying that M. Thiers was the liberator of the territory. The reactionary press gave the signal. M. Buffet, the new president, proclaimed everywhere that if these words were not openly disavowed he should immediately recall the Chamber. M. de Goulard, who was gentleness and amiability personified, in the ordinary course of life, completely lost all self-restraint, and made a violent scene in the Council. He had allowed himself to be persuaded by certain members of the party, that his taking office as Minister of the Interior was to be the commencement of a new policy. One day he had even said to his colleagues, to their profound astonishment, "I

must let my hand be felt;" whereas it was in order that his hand should not be felt that M. Thiers had chosen him.

This excellent man was a good patriot, a good administrator, but a somewhat bewildered Minister of the Interior. In the Cabinet he represented the reactionary party, and M. Jules Simon the Left. They both resigned at the same time, and with one accord. M. Thiers gave the Ministry of the Interior to M. Casimir Périer. In order to make a place in the Cabinet for M. Bérenger, a good speaker, and a man of strong character and lucidity of ideas, the office which M. Jules Simon resigned was made a double one; M. Waddington being appointed to the Ministry of Public Instruction, and M. de Fourtou, who gave up the Public Works to M. Bérenger, appointed to the Administration of Public Worship. Thus the Cabinet was renewed and strengthened for the last great struggle.

M. Thiers wrote the following letter to M. Jules Simon:—

"My dear colleague and friend,

"It is with a great pang that I part with you. . . . I shall always remember the three years during which you have been to me a friend, a colleague on whom I could lean, and a fellow-worker of rarest capacity. In my eyes you are

the able man *par excellence*, and it needs the wretched passions of the hour to make it possible that your services should be set aside. But you remain, and will remain, in the midst of the national representation, and there you will have one of the best places. You will one day be a resource for our country in the series of adventures which the future may have in store for it. God grant they may end well.. As for me, I make a last effort without knowing what will be the result. But it will be the last, and I shall then go to seek rest in the midst of my friends, among whom you will occupy, I hope, the first rank.

"Yours cordially,

"A. THIERS.

"May 18, 1873."

V.

THE Chamber reassembled on Monday, 19th May. M. Buffet, the president, immediately read the following :—

"The undersigned, convinced that the gravity of the situation requires a Cabinet at the head of affairs whose strength will reassure the country, ask leave to interpellate the ministry on the recent modifications which have been made in it, and on the necessity of causing a resolutely conservative policy to prevail in the Government.

"They propose Friday for the interpellation."

This document bore no less than 320 signatures. With such numbers, a party is always master of an Assembly. The majority manifested their intentions plainly the next day by electing M. de Goulard first vice-president of the Assembly by 367 votes. There was no longer any doubt either within or without the Assembly that these 367 members had resolved on the overthrow of M.

Thiers and the substitution of Marshal MacMahon in his place. Ever since the month of February the Marshal had assiduously attended the debates in the Chamber, and on all sides he was pointed out as "The President of the Right." Only before the last prorogation the time had not been fixed. M. Buffet was President, M. Barodet was elected, the anticipated evacuation of the territory was decided on, therefore all that was now wanting was a speech and a ballot.

The event of 24th May, which took the country at large by surprise, was foreseen by all who closely followed the course of politics. The Right, who had long allowed their anger to be evident, no longer took any trouble to conceal their intention. M. Thiers had voluntarily precipitated the crisis by his message of 13th November. He held, as a statesman, that after the liberation had been effected, the provisional form of the Government would be a source of weakness to it and of ruin to the country. Therefore it was necessary either to convince the Right of their weakness or to make way for them.

On the meeting of the Chamber on the 19th, he knew that the crisis was at hand. It came a few weeks earlier than he had expected. The

coalition compromised our greatest interest, the liberation of the territory, by thus bringing on a crisis at a time when the last divisions of the German army were commencing their retreat, and this was playing an invidious part. M. Thiers said several times during the debate, "You are acting five weeks too soon; it would have been both wiser and more patriotic to wait five weeks longer." That is to say, until the liberation had been completely effected. The Right were fully aware of this; but they said, firstly, that the treaties had been signed, the money was ready, the movement had commenced, that there was no difficulty pending between the two governments, and that doubtless the operation would be completed without hindrance; and secondly, they would not give the majority, which they had formed with such difficulty, time to melt away.

This majority was very precarious.

It is quite true that, since the meeting of the Assembly at Bordeaux, the Right had been in the majority, but it was an opposition majority. It is always easy to get up a majority in opposition, by coalitions. Constitutionalists, Legitimists, and Bonapartists, will readily agree to pass a bill which has no strictly political character, or to resist Republican tendencies, or to over-

throw a minister. But they could not displace M. Thiers without replacing him, and the choice of his successor was not an act of opposition, but an act of government. The three monarchies had an equal interest in overthrowing M. Thiers, because the fact of his being in power indefinitely adjourned their return, and every day increased the chances of the stability and definite establishment of the Republic; but the difficulty was to find a successor to him who, while he would be little in favour of the Republic, would not give the advantage to the Legitimists, the Bonapartists, or the Orleanists. This difficulty stopped the whole of the proceedings for some time; and the members of the Government, whose eyes were open, looked on with much interest, as may well be imagined, at the efforts which were made to overcome it. M. Thiers, who reckoned gratitude as of some account, believed that the Right would find no way out of their difficulty. He said, "They have nobody." A general was required, first, to maintain the army, and then to appease certain susceptibilities and pretensions. We had no lack of generals. M. Thiers had made answer one day to an ambitious and restless general, who complained of a certain choice made by Government for a very important post, "No one of you was pointed out to me by

victory." The remark was a just one, though severe, and above all it was well applied. We had, alas! no victorious generals, but we had generals of great merit who possessed the confidence of the army; we even had many. If merit were the only consideration, we might have been embarrassed by the number of candidates. But merit was not enough, there was a more difficult condition to be satisfied; we must have a general who was not too obscure, and yet who did not take too decided a line in politics. Such a man, in such times as ours, it was almost impossible to find. It is all very well to say that the army fights and does not counsel. All parties repeat this fine maxim with great emphasis when they despair of having the army on their side. The Constitution of 1848 lays down in its 104th Article that "the armed force is essentially obedient." It adds that "no armed body can hold deliberations." This is both right and reasonable; and, moreover, it is the case, if we mean by this that the scandal of *pronunciamientos*, which elsewhere have too often set up might for right, do not take place in France. Nevertheless, when the air is thick with revolution, or preparations for revolution, the question is eagerly asked, whether the chiefs of the army will obey the law, and whether the army will obey its chiefs?

And, even apart from revolutions and *coups d'état*, there are times when generals, if not soldiers and subaltern officers, can only avoid declaring themselves if they have been blessed by Providence with a rare talent for silence. Among our generals of 1873, some had taken part in the Imperial *coup d'état*, which of course excluded them; others had been ministers, or aides-de-camp, or favourites of the Emperor, and owed their advancement to their personal devotion to him; others, while accepting commands under the Republic, loudly proclaimed their attachment to the Orleans family or to the Legitimate royalty. The same general might, according to the occasion, be a passionate Legitimist or Orleanist; he might fight against the Republic under any flag, even that with the stain of Sedan upon it; but no emergency of his position, no effort of his will, could make a neutral of him, and it was above all a neutral of whom we stood in need. This valuable quality of neutrality was specially wanting in General Changarnier, even more than in all the others; and besides, he had all the defects of youth, although he had completed his eightieth year just one month previously. Of the Republican generals, many of whom—Chanzy, Jauréguiberry, Pothnau, Frébault, Faidherbe — had a great military reputation, there could be no question.

The objections against all the generals, one alone excepted, were so decided and so evident, that the choice was not far to seek. The three coalesced monarchies then agreed in nominating Marshal MacMahon, who was indicated by his rank, and by the position of commander-in-chief which M. Thiers had given him. It might be said that he was not enrolled in any party. His family traditions were Legitimist, but his career had been under the Emperor, who also had specially distinguished him. An occasion was called to mind on which he had proved that he was no courtier, and that he knew how to vote and speak independently. It is a very certain and a very curious fact, that if any scruple had prevented him from yielding to the wishes of the Right, it would have had nobody to take the place.

The majority had then fixed upon him. It was also necessary to have a coalition ministry ready, into which each party wanted to introduce sentinels. M. de Broglie took with him M. Beulé, who would in no way inconvenience him, for the Home department; M. Batbie, who had invented the happy but dangerous phrase of "a ministry of combat," was relegated to the Ministry of Public Instruction. M. Ernoul, M. de la Bouillerie, Admiral Dompierre d'Hornoy, and

M. de Meaux, amply represented the Legitimist party. M. Magne took Finance in the name of the Empire. The Minister of War had yet to be found. It was well known that M. de Cissey would not refuse to take the post *ad interim*. The Staff being thus constituted, the Duc de Broglie took upon himself to give battle. On the 23rd May he ascended the tribune at the commencement of the sitting to support the interpellation.

"The elections of the 27th April, and the 11th May, have," he said, "given the victory in fact to the Radical party. Universal suffrage is organized in such a way that if it is not kept in order, the radical party will soon, by means of the elections, attain the direction of affairs.

"The Radical is not an ordinary political party, it is a social party. Absolute civil equality, religious liberty, and universal suffrage do not satisfy it. It believes that there yet remain great reforms, almost social revolutions, to be carried out. Consequently it is a party which threatens to recast if not to destroy, the present basis of society."

Was the Government, constituted as it was up to the 16th May, prepared to resist the Radical party? Was it able to prevent their success?

There were two opposite and co-existent poli-

cies in the Cabinet which had each their momentary supremacy, prevailing by turns, and in a manner dividing the map of France between them, so that whole regions seemed to be given up by the Administration to one or the other party.

The Duc de Broglie and his friends had long before pointed out to M. Thiers this antagonism between his ministers, and the want of unity, and consequently of strength that resulted from it. The candidature of M. de Rémusat finally convinced every one, that if there were no friends or adherents of the Radical party in the Cabinet, there were in it ministers who looked upon forbearance and compromise as the best means of restraining its passions, or lessening its pretensions, and who thought that it ought to be treated with gentleness and patience, not dealt with according to the rigour of the law; and that whatever there might be of harshness in legal repression should be tempered by graciousness in personal relations. Others, on the contrary, wished to break with it in form as well as in substance, and to seek for alliances with the Right. This division of opinion had declared itself more especially with regard to the candidature of M. Barodet. What did the Radical party want, when it set M. Barodet in opposition to M. de Rémusat, the deposed mayor of Lyons

against the minister of M. Thiers? It wanted its revenge for the act, recently accepted by the Government, and energetically supported by one of its ministers, which suppressed the municipality of Lyons. What, asked M. de Broglie, had the official or officious organs of the Government, the patrons of the candidature, done during the electoral period? They had condemned that act as a blow aimed against the municipal franchise. One minister supports, another repudiates it. M. de Goulard assists the Assembly in overthrowing this citadel of the Radical party; M. de Rémusat accuses the Assembly of having offered a gratuitous provocation to municipal franchise.

While this great electoral contest was going on, M. Jules Simon delivered a speech which contained a grave offence against the Assembly, at a congress of learned societies.

"To say, in fact, that one man, and one man only, however illustrious he may be, has effected the liberation of French territory, to say so when the Assembly had received the redemption of our independence as its first mission from the country, was to tell it that it had neglected and endangered the most sacred portion of its mandate. Whether this was asserted expressly, or by inference, the offence remains the same."

And it was not only an offence. "It offered

a very considerable support to the first article of the programme of the Radical party, since that first article is the immediate dissolution of the Assembly."

M. de Broglie stated that M. Jules Simon's words were disavowed in the most formal manner by M. de Goulard in the Permanent Committee.

"He declared that he would not be answerable for them. The conflict had then reached the acute stage. The newspapers had taken it up, and the two opinions were represented by M. de Goulard on the one side, and by M. Jules Simon on the other. This contest was carried on with all possible publicity for three weeks, each of the ministers being supported by certain journals, and the public waiting to see to which side the Government would incline."

The two ministers left the Cabinet together. But in what sense have they been replaced? In the sense of M. Jules Simon; for M. Casimir Périer, M. Bérenger, and M. Waddington, represent the opinions of M. Jules Simon, while they in no way represent those of M. de Goulard. Therefore the reconstituted Cabinet has less power to defend conservative doctrines against Radical invasion, than had the Cabinet of a week before. This was close reasoning; yet might be accused of several inaccuracies, and of one serious reservation.

That the last election had given the victory to the Radical party was an undeniable fact; but from this partial success to argue the near and probable advent to power of the Radical party, was an allegation without proof or likelihood. The wind blew then, as now, towards the Republic, but that is not the same thing as radicalism, and we have seen at many epochs that in republican majorities it is not the ultras who get the upper hand.

It ought to be clearly understood that when we speak of the Radical party according to M. de Broglie, we include under that title the impatient and imprudent Republicans, who take no account either of present needs or of the conditions indispensable to good order; in a word, the advanced, the ultras. It is a vague word, because it characterizes a party which is distinguished from that of the moderate Republicans rather by its passions than by its doctrines.

If M. de Broglie meant to refer to downright Republicans, he would have called them Jacobins. If he had meant those Republicans who modify property, or who deny it, he would have called them Socialists or Communists. But he said "The Radicals," on purpose to avoid precision. It is a constant habit with his party to give to the Republicans the name

of Radicals, and to represent Radicalism not as a political enemy, but as a social danger.

When M. de Broglie spoke of two opposite policies in the Cabinet, he was right. It had been so ever since the Bordeaux days. M. de Larcy and M. Jules Simon, who were in the same cabinet, had never belonged to the same party. The exceptional situation of the country, and the composition of the Assembly itself, explained these anomalies, but did not remove their inconvenience. After the 24th May, the same causes produced the same effects; and it is amusing to remark that the same orator who made such a display of the disagreement of opinion between M. Jules Simon and M. de Goulard, had in his pocket a list of a Cabinet, in which his own name occurred in company with those of M. Magne and M. Ernoul. The antagonism pointed out by M. de Broglie, was none the less real; the three examples cited by him, the act with regard to the municipality of Lyons, the election of M. de Rémusat, and the speech of M. Jules Simon at the Sorbonne, were not the only proofs, but these three examples sufficed for the demonstration and were all three indisputable. M. Jules Simon contested in the Council the act regarding the municipality of Lyons: he even believed that he had brought over the majority to his opinion; and he has

always thought that M. de Goulard had, in the warmth of discussion, pledged the Cabinet beyond what was justified by the resolutions taken in common. He spoke bitterly of it in the next day's Council, and even went so far as to give in his resignation. It was the same thing with regard to the candidature of M. de Rémusat. M. Jules Simon opposed that candidature, he did not believe in its success. Far from thinking, with M. de Broglie, that its partisans gave it too pronounced a Republican character, he was of opinion that its supporters addressed themselves too much to the reactionary, and not enough to the Republican party; he told his colleagues that by delaying the Lyons election, they lost M. de Rémusat's chance. He would not even be present at a conflict of which he disapproved and which he thought ill-managed. He spent the election time in the South.

As for his speech at the Sorbonne, it is very true that M. de Goulard bitterly reproached him with it in the Council. For two days he even refused to publish the text of it in the *Journal Officiel*, which gave occasion to the most unfounded suppositions. He gave way only at M. Thiers' command, and on the formal announcement of M. Jules Simon that if his speech was not published he would resign his portfolio. M. Jules Simon

moreover desired to be solely accountable for his own words, and it was with his authorization, or rather at his request, that M. de Goulard and M. Dufaure made that declaration.

M. de Broglie was therefore in the right upon these several points, or rather, he would have been in the right up to the 16th May exclusive. But from that date M. Jules Simon and M. de Goulard, who understood better than any one that things could not go on in that manner, left the Cabinet together. M. Thiers had filled up their places with Republican ministers. The Cabinet was therefore very homogeneous at the time of the debate, infinitely more so, at any rate, than the reactionary Cabinets have ever been.

M. de Broglie, as though he were bent upon showing that his argument was no longer applicable, insisted on the Republican character of the new Cabinet. It may even be said that he exaggerated it. He was not quite within the truth when he asserted that MM. Casimir Périer, Bérenger, and Waddington carried on the policy of M. Jules Simon, and even carried it further than he did. M. Waddington belonged to the most moderate section of the Left-Centre. M. Bérenger had defended the act on the Lyons municipality as much and better than M. de Goulard.

These are details of but slight importance.

That which might justly be brought against the Right is that it would not admit, as it had so often done, that it was simply making war against the Republic. If it had said through its spokesman, "We see that the Republic is consolidating itself under the Government of M. Thiers, and for that cause it is that we overthrow it," it would have spoken the truth at once, and would have given to the whole of M. de Broglie's speech that strength which accompanies plain dealing.

Yes, universal suffrage was leading to the Republic. Yes, the result of the duration of M. Thiers' Government was the foundation and the sanction of the Republic. Yes, there were among the ministry Republicans by conviction; M. Jules Simon was far from being the only one; he was hardly even older in his adherence to the Republic than M. Dufaure, who had not changed since 1848. Yes, M. Jules Simon and some few of his colleagues pressed for a reconciliation and good understanding with the other sections of the Republican party, to the exclusion of course of the enemies of society and of liberty. And finally, M. Casimir Périer, M. Bérenger, and M. Waddington were on the side of that conciliation towards persons, without any concession of principles, which was M. Thiers' wish also. Once more, if M. de Broglie had said, "We want to overthrow

M. Thiers because we want to overthrow the Republic," the situation would have been a nobler one for him and his, and better defined for all the world. But how is it possible to speak openly if you are speaking in the name of three irreconcilable enemies, who have nothing but a hatred in common?

M. Dufaure and M. Thiers made answer one after the other to M. de Broglie. M. Dufaure went through the speech point by point, but M. Thiers hardly alluded to it; he ascended the tribune in order to relate the history of his own Government, to show the Assembly that it was encouraging moral disorder in France by its divisions, and that there was but one remedy left: the proclamation of the Republic. His speech was surrounded with all the formalities prescribed by the new act of the Thirty. A decision of the Council of Ministers, transmitted to the Assembly, had first declared that it was not a Cabinet question, but a Government question that was under discussion. Then M. Thiers had given notice by a message that he was intending to speak. No one could speak after him during the same sitting. It vexed the impatient spirits on the Right that they had to submit to the law which they themselves had made. They decided, and without fitting respect for M. Thiers' age, that he should be heard at nine

o'clock in the morning. In this way a second sitting might be held in the same day, and in the evening Marshal MacMahon should be proclaimed.

"I am the chief culprit," began M. Thiers, "I come to confess it with the pride of a clear conscience and the candour of an honest citizen."

He did not conceal that there was some bitterness in his heart, but there should be none upon his lips. They were in a great hurry to snatch the power out of his hands, the very moment that the task of the liberation of the territory had been accomplished. The liberation was obtained, the treaty signed, the appointed sums were ready; there only remained to carry out the movement of retreat, which would last five weeks. They might have waited five weeks before pronouncing the famous "Turn out, if you please!" It would have been wiser and more patriotic.

M. Thiers had been openly reproached with not having a homogeneous Cabinet. That must mean that they held it a crime that Republicans were in it. If he had been willing to govern by members of the Right, and according to the ideas of the Right, it is clear that the Right would not have overthrown him. All parties had offered to defend him at the same price; but neither the situation of France, nor that of the Assembly,

would admit of his making a party Government, which would immediately have become a Government of civil war. This it was which in 1871 had made the Pact of Bordeaux necessary. Was the state of things at all changed? Had the parties laid down their arms? "You will look at us and judge us, you have a right to do so; but it is your duty to look at yourselves, and recognize in what an unexampled condition of discord you are here.

"In this Assembly, as in all others, there is a Right and a Left; but the two parties are in almost equal numbers on either side, they are separated by irreconcilable differences, and they themselves are troubled by profound divisions: two Republics here, and there three Monarchies.

"You cannot deny your numerical equality on the 24th May, for on the 23rd you counted yourselves over twice, once for M. de Larcy and once for M. Martel, 304 against 308, 323 against 330; this is the strength of the two armies. This comparison gives the advantage by a few votes to the Monarchists in the Assembly, but in the country the Republicans have it. If you would deny this, you must neither read the papers nor have the power of understanding the voice of the public; you must forget all those successive elections which have so roused the ire of the

Monarchists, because they tell against them. Even if the Monarchists had numbers on their side, which is not the case, they could found nothing, because they cannot unite together. The first of the three Monarchies which should attempt to establish itself, would forthwith have to cope with the other two, leaving the Republicans, who are alone enough to crush it, out of the question. The Right can only attain to power by an equivocation; it can only govern through an equivocation. It is condemned to be provisional, and its rule would condemn the country to a provisional state, that is to say, to ruin, both material and moral.

"There is a difference between yesterday and to-day. Yesterday, that is to say, at Bordeaux, neither a Monarchy nor the Republic could be formed, because material disorder had to be repaired, and material and organic elements of life restored to France. To-day, thanks to the Government, which has overcome anarchy, re-formed the Administration, the army, and the finances, and liberated the territory, a definitive Republic may be formed. A Monarchy there cannot be, because there are three claimants and but one throne."

In accepting office at Bordeaux, M. Thiers had undertaken a double task, a task of present urgency and a task for the future.

"What was the situation? I will recall it in two words, not to lay claim to gratitude,—I know what men are, and it is not that which I ask of them,—but to obtain justice,—justice, but not for myself; at my age all I require is an honoured memory, and that I hope to leave behind me. (*Yes! yes!*)

"No, I have no fear for my memory, for I have no intention of appealing to party tribunals; before them I am found wanting, but I am not found wanting at the tribunal of history, and I deserve to appear before it. (*Applause from the Left.*)

"Let me recall the facts: 400,000 men occupied the north of France as far as the Loire; of two hostile armies, the one menaced Bordeaux, the other Lyons. As for our own troops, some, after a most creditable effort, had been forced into Switzerland, others were in the fortresses of the North, the others beyond the Loire. Means of resistance there were none. Passion led some of you to think that there were, but passion led you astray: there were none; I saw it! And when I, for my part, said to myself that peace must be made, I had a profound conviction that to continue the war would be an act of madness.

"Our finances consisted only in the resources of the Bank of France. The taxes no longer came into the Treasury; they remained in the

provinces. As to credit, we had only that which under such circumstances was possible.

"But for the Bank, which gave credit to the future of France,—not, I strongly affirm, to its present—we could not have existed.

"Everywhere there was disorder, anarchy. . . . Is this an exaggerated picture?"

That which seemed almost an impossibility in 1871, has been done. The insurrection of Paris, the anarchy of France, have been conquered. Material order is established everywhere. The collection of the taxes is progressing, in spite of overwhelming burdens. The administration is as regular and as much respected as ever it was. Labour has recovered itself, commerce is bringing in profits. For our loans we were offered forty-three milliards. The payments have been made not only with facility, but in anticipation. While elsewhere finance is in difficulties and crises abound, we who have had to pay such enormous sums, astonish Europe by the punctuality of our payments. We have already paid four milliards. We are ready for the remainder.

We are asked, ironically, whether we have allies. We cannot have allies nowadays, owing to the insensate policy of the Empire, which has shattered what was once called the balance of power in Europe.

"The esteem which we inspire, that is the true alliance. I venture to say, that France, by displaying such great vitality, has almost recovered from the blow which defeat had inflicted on her prestige. People believe in France, seeing the conduct of her Government, which has only one merit, but a substantial one: it is that of sequence in its plans and consistency in its conduct.

"The truest alliance," added M. Thiers, "is that which lies in the esteem with which we inspire Europe, and our successors will find the proof of it in records which I cannot lay before you here."

Thus, by a wise policy of conciliation, the Government had produced these unhoped-for results, which a party policy, a policy of combat, could never have obtained.

"The task, which was urgent, has been fulfilled. We have now to face the future. Reorganization achieved, there remains constitution. The Government, having saved the country, has put the Chamber in a position to give itself a constitution. It is this fact which the Government now declares to the Chamber, warning it that now, when a constitution has become possible, it is urgent; and at the same time, as the bounden duty of the Government, it tells the Chamber in what sense that constitution ought

to be framed. This is the moment selected for the condemnation and overthrow of the Government. The Government is reproached with not being sufficiently conservative. That is a subterfuge! The Government is as conservative, and more so, than any of the parties, and they know it well enough. They are upsetting it because it desires to form the Republic. That is what they should have the courage and the good faith to say. And those who would prevent the foundation of the Republic cannot found the Monarchy! and they know it! All they can do, and they can do nothing more, is to keep France indefinitely in a provisional condition. And this ambiguity, this policy of negation, is what, by a bold abuse of language, they call a resolutely conservative policy."

And now, not being able to establish a Government, because they are hopelessly divided, nor to govern the country because the country is against them, what are they going to establish? A dictatorship. The dictatorship of the incapable. "Be warned," cried M. Thiers, "be warned! It was the dictatorship of great men that ruined you; that of little men will only ruin you the more thoroughly, and with less glory!"

How can a country go on living on expedients, and in a provisional state? It is wonderful that

we have been able to exist thus for nearly three years. France gave credit to the Government, because of the difficulties it had to meet, and the great duties it had to fulfil, but now France is bent upon having a definite and respected Government. Now that France has recovered the organs of life, she intends to live, she is weary of the pretensions and intrigues of these three Governments in expectancy, each of which only awaits the moment to deceive the others, and crush the Government *in esse*, which gives her the security of order, and which alone has any chance of lasting. The government that France wants must be one whose authority cannot be questioned, and whose principles are not subjected to daily-recurring attacks; one against which it shall not be permitted to preach overt disobedience and treason.

M. Thiers did not come into the midst of the Assembly at this supreme moment to prove that he had been faithful to his duty. France saved, reconstituted, liberated, was his sponsor; he did not come to vindicate his claim to be regarded as a conservative: no citizen in France, no sovereign in Europe has laboured, in season and out of season, or more successfully, for the re-establishment of order; he did not come as a suppliant because one of his ministers had said at a learned

meeting, that France owes the liberation of its territory to M. Thiers, and to him alone; that was a crime expiated by the resignation of the minister; finally, he has not come to justify himself for having let M. de Goulard go; if even M. de Goulard had greater devotion, greater patriotism, greater administrative capacity, a finer political instinct, than M. Casimir Périer, his successor; it is not for events of that magnitude that revolutions are made. The Right is pleased to expatiate upon these ministers in order to mask the real point of the debate. Such quibbling does not suit M. Thiers.

The question is this: to found or not to found the Republic. There it is, that is the matter which occupies every conscience. It is the cry of France from end to end. A phrase of M. Jules Simon's indeed! is *that* the question? Or M. de Goulard's hand, which he wants us to feel, or the opinions of M. Barodet? What does it matter whether M. Thiers is or is not a conservative in the same sense as M. de Gavardie, in the same sense as M. de Lorgeril, or in the same sense as M. du Temple. M. Thiers tramples all that underfoot. Let all these trifling topics, these "chinoiseries" of debate be put aside for leisure hours. To-day the question is to make or not to make the Republic. M. Thiers said to the

Assembly: "We have reorganized and delivered France, that was our first task; it is done. Now, we want a fixed Government, we propose to you to make it, at once; and we add, it must be Republican, it cannot be anything but Republican. Will you found the Republic? Here we are to found it with you. Do you wish to prolong the period of doubt and hesitation, to the ill and peril of France? Then overturn us. There is nothing else to vote." Such in brief was this great speech, or rather this great act.

As he was about to leave the tribune M. Thiers remembered M. de Broglie.

"We were told yesterday, with a pity which touched me deeply, that our fate was the subject of much concern, for that we were about to become *protégés;* and of whom? of the Radicals. For me, an unfortunate end was predicted. I have faced it more than once in doing my duty: nor am I sure I may not have to face it again.

"And then we were told that an unfortunate end is a bad thing, but that there is something worse, and that is an end which is ridiculous as well.

"I must be allowed to think that very severe. A man who had served his country all his life, who throughout the most difficult times had

sacrificed his popularity to truth, who had rendered services such as I do not pretend to have rendered; such a man might treat men like those who sit on these (*the ministerial*) benches with pity of this kind.

"I thank the speaker for his compassionate sentiments (*laughter on the Left*). I ask his leave to reciprocate them, and to tell him that I too pity him. He will no more get a majority than we shall; but he too will become a *protégé*, and shall I tell him of whom? . . . of a protector whom the former Duc de Broglie would have repelled with horror: he will be the *protégé* of the Empire!"

The sitting was adjourned after this speech according to the terms of the law of the Thirty, which forbade an answer to the President of the Republic during the same sitting. It was now nearly noon, and it was decided that the next sitting should take place at two o'clock. M. Casimir Périer ascended the tribune at two, and read a very moderate and firm speech, rather in the nature of a programme than of a discussion.

"It is in order to oppose Radicalism that we wish for the Republic, and that we appeal to all who, without distinction of party, make the abatement of political passions and the welfare

of the public their first object, a matter of the most urgent necessity.

"We ask them in the midst of so many different competitors, to give us that strength which we need to control the enemies of peaceable and regular order.

"We ask for a Government which has the right to call itself by its name, in order that it may be able to say whither it is going, and that it may be followed."

M. Ernoul proposed the order of the day in these terms:—

"The National Assembly;

"Considering that the form of the Government s not under discussion;

"That the constitutional laws have been laid before the Assembly by its own decree, and that the Assembly is therefore bound to discuss them;

"But that at the present time, it is important to reassure the country . . . (*ironical cheers from the Left*) . . . but that at the present time it is important to reassure the country, by making a resolutely conservative policy prevail in the Government (*interruptions from the Left*);

"Regrets that the recent ministerial changes have not given conservative interests the satisfaction which they had a right to expect . . . (*loud*

exclamations from the Left; cheers on the Right, answered by ironical counter-cheers on the Left), and passes to the order of the day."

Of the 320, forty-three, almost all of whom were Legitimists, had signed this motion to pass to the order of the day. M. de Broglie figured second on the list. There were five or six Orleanists, and only two Bonapartists. M. Target immediately ascended the tribune, and read the following declaration:—

"While associating ourselves with the motion for the order of the day, in order to specify the purpose and intention of our vote, we declare ourselves resolved to accept the Republican solution, as contained in the collection of constitutional laws which have been brought forward by the Government, and to put an end to a state of uncertainty which endangers the material interests of the country. We intend, by adopting M. Ernoul's order of the day, to express our opinion that the Government of the President of the Republic should in future adopt a distinct and strongly conservative policy." (*Laughter on the Left, and cheers on the Right.*)

M. Schœlcher.—"We demand the names of the signatories of this declaration."

M. Buffet, the President.—"The signatories are: MM. Target, Paul Cottin, Prétavoine, Balsan,

Mathieu Bodet, Lefébure, Caillaux, Eugène Tallon, Louis Passy, Albert Delacour, Léon Vingtain, Deseilligny, Dufournel, Daguilhon, Martell (Charente)." Fifteen names.

These fifteen representatives called themselves Republicans. They talked of the Government of the President of the Republic in terms which might lead one to believe that this President continued to be M. Thiers. They declared themselves resolved to associate themselves with the most significant acts of M. Thiers' Government; that is to say, with the passing of the constitutional laws. Finally, they agreed with the Government, that the present state of uncertainty must come to an end.

But, in advising M. Thiers in future to adopt a distinct and strongly conservative policy, they accused him of being wanting in distinctness and of not being sufficiently conservative. In consenting to this vote, the object and result of which were not and could not be ignored by any one, they prevented the establishment of a definitive form of Government; they prevented the proclamation of the Republic; they overthrew M. Thiers; and they gave birth to a Government formed, against the Republic and Republicans, by a coalition of Legitimists, Orleanists, and Bonapartists.

The order of the day pure and simple was moved, with an amendment which weakened its effect.

M. Dufaure declared that he opposed the amendment, but that he was in favour of the order of the day.

On being put to the vote it was rejected by 362 against 348.

M. Broët and M. Lefèvre-Pontalis then proposed the following wording :—

"The National Assembly, having confidence in the declarations of the Government, and having reason to expect a thoroughly conservative policy from it, passes to the order of the day."

But why this attempt ?

Some members of the Left-Centre approved, some members of the Right were indignant at it. Approval and indignation were alike wasted. The Government had just been defeated on the question of the order of the day, by the fifteen votes. It could not honourably, or with utility to the public service, avail itself of an amendment which was a compromise. The vote was taken on M. Ernoul's motion. M. Baragnon asked for a secret ballot, but immediately withdrew his demand. It was proposed to vote at the tribune. Upon this proposition, after two doubtful attempts, 342 voted for the vote at the tribune and 366

against. Finally, the voting on M. Ernoul's order of the day was 360 *ayes*, 344 *noes*, majority 16. Thus ended M. Thiers' Government in Parliament. In the country it was a different matter.

M. Baragnon thought fit to greet the vote with noisy exultation. Hardly had the result of the voting been declared than he ascended the tribune.

"I have just had the honour of approaching the bench of the Ministers, and asking them if they had any communication to make to the Assembly.

"The language held by the Government throughout the course of this debate led me to suppose that it had something to tell us.

"The Ministers have remained silent.

"The sovereign interest of the country demands that the Government should speak quickly.

"The Government has placed itself, by its own language, under obligation to declare, and to declare at once, whether it remains or ceases to be."

Why M. Baragnon took this course we cannot tell; certainly no one could suppose that M. Thiers would have any idea of remaining in power until the next day.

This summons to resign on the spot was quite

to the taste of the Right, who greeted it with prolonged applause. M. Baragnon proposed a third sitting at eight o'clock that evening.

M. Horace de Choiseul.—"Does the Government ask for this sitting? Has it any communications to make?"

M. Buffet, the President.—"None of the Ministers have asked to speak; I can therefore only consult the Assembly on the proposition which is made; it is for it to determine."

A Member.—"What is on the orders of the day for this sitting?"

M. de Rességuier.—"The welfare of the country."

M. Emmanuel Arago ascended the tribune for the purpose of stating specifically that the sitting would be without any order of the day, and consequently with the sole object of summoning M. Thiers to tender his resignation and make way for his successor on the spot. They all knew there was not the slightest doubt that he was going to do this, but not satisfied with that, they had the good taste to constrain him.

At eight o'clock, therefore, according to M. Baragnon's motion, the third sitting was held. M. Thiers' resignation was in the following terms:—

"Versailles, May 24th, 1873.

"M. le Président,

"I have the honour to place my resignation of the office of President of the Republic, which it conferred upon me, before the National Assembly.

"It is unnecessary for me to add, that the Government will continue to fulfil its duties until it shall be regularly replaced.

"Receive the assurance of my high consideration,

"A. THIERS,

"*Member of the National Assembly.*"

The signature had hardly been read when General Changarnier asked leave to speak, in order to propose the immediate election of the new President. M. Buffet announced that he would consult the wishes of the Assembly. "But," said General Billot, "it would be proper to inform the Keeper of the Seals of the Message of the President of the Republic, announcing his resignation."

M. Buffet, although a great formalist, had not thought of this.

M. Buffet.—"I accept your suggestion."

M. le General Billot.—"And the Assembly has not yet agreed upon the acceptance of this resignation."

M. Buffet was not sure that it was necessary

to take so much trouble. M. Foubert had already reminded them that resignation is not definite until it has been accepted. Upon that, M. Buffet had threatened him with a call to order; but objections being raised on all sides, the President saw that M. Thiers' resignation would not be allowed thus to pass as an incident of no importance. He allowed M. Foubert to speak, who overruling the cries and tumult of the Right, said in a few words what the Republicans thought of M. Thiers, what history will say of him. A formal motion was proposed in these terms :—

"The undersigned propose that the Assembly do not accept M. Thiers' resignation."

The Left insisted on the motion being put to the vote. A Bonapartist asked a question,—

"Does the Government accept this vote?"

To this no reply was made.

The authors of the proposal had not even spoken of it to the Government; they knew, they did not doubt, that they would be defeated; they also knew that even if they carried their motion, M. Thiers would nevertheless persist in his resolution. They only wished, as M. George said, to impose a little sense of decency on the Assembly, and to make it thoroughly responsible for its actions. Three hundred and thirty-one members

voted for the refusal to accept the resignation, 362 for its acceptance.

M. Buffet then bethought himself of an address of condolence to the resigning President. The manner in which the majority had long treated M. Thiers, the coalition that had been formed against him during the last prorogation, a coalition of which M. Buffet and M. de Broglie had been the soul, the reception which had been given the day before to M. Dufaure, and that morning to M. Thiers, M. Baragnon's summons to the Ministry at the commencement of the sitting in the tribune that evening, the precipitancy with which they had wished to proceed to the election of another President, the remembrance of the immense services which M. Thiers had rendered, and the immense ingratitude with which they had been repaid, anxiety with regard to the perils into which monarchic ambition might plunge France, caused the Left to object very strongly to M. Buffet's strange suggestion. Never was there a more spontaneous and unanimous movement. At the first words that he attempted to speak, the whole Left rose with the evident intention of silencing him. He could not speak, he could only protest. "The official report," he said, "shall insert my protests against the violence of the minority." The

minority attached as much importance to this statement as did M. Buffet. The minority did not hinder the fulfilment of his duties as President. It only raised an obstacle, an insuperable obstacle no doubt, to a speech which it regarded as a scandal.

A few members of the Left proposed that the proposition of General Changarnier should be remitted to the bureau. This might, perhaps, have been according to rule; but it did not signify. The fact was that Marshal MacMahon had been elected long ago *in petto;* he was elected officially at ten o'clock that night. Out of 721 members present at the sitting, only 391 voted, and Marshal MacMahon had 390 votes. The bureau immediately proceeded to his residence, to communicate the news, which was not calculated to take him by surprise. Another half-hour and the same bureau returned with an equally foreseen assent on the part of the Marshal.

The "24th May" had come to an end.

The election of Marshal MacMahon was not a conclusion; it was quite the contrary. It was the indefinite postponement of the conclusion; something in the nature of the renewal of the Pact of Bordeaux, but this time with a definite date and a private understanding against the Republic.

After a very short time the date seemed too near. Then came the ten years' proposal, afterwards restricted by agreement to seven. We should have for seven years "the Government of the Marshal." In seven years we should see what was to be done with France. We should cure her in seven years of the fancy she had taken for the Republic, and set her on the road to Monarchy. Which of the monarchies was not specified, and for a very good reason, each promised himself that it should be his own.

M. Claretie, in his brilliant *Histoire de la Revolution de* 1870, has taken care to give some samples of the polemics of certain reactionary journals at this epoch. They throw no light on M. Thiers and his ministers; but they do throw a good deal upon their conquerors. We shall borrow two quotations from his list.

This is from the *Patrie*:—

"This morning certain concierges, who had stopped up the gratings of their cellars since the Commune, began to open them. One of them, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Rue Taitbout and the Rue du Helder, was cheerily engaged at this work, with a huge hammer, when a passer-by asked him,—

"'What are you doing there?'

"'Well, I am unstopping all this; we have no longer any fear of being burnt out!'"

The other instance is an extract from the *Univers*:—

"The future, we hope, will be worthy of this commencement. And since the public prayers which were offered up on the 21st have brought about this first result on the very day of our Lady of Succour, there is nothing to prevent our hoping that St. Gregory VII., whose fête we celebrate to-day, and the pilgrimages which have just recommenced, will gain for us those final solutions which, raising France and the church from their common calamities, will associate them in the victory gained in common over the Revolution."

"This Barodet, as hairy as a squirrel, will have been a many-edged tool."

One journal accuses the "sinister old man" of having been about to make a Coup d'État. "The warrants were signed; about eighty arrests in the political and journalistic world would have been made in the night between Saturday and Sunday." Never was there such an exhibition of hatred, and such an audacious and obstinate determination to disregard truth.

On the morning of the 25th, the whole of the Left went in a body to the Prefecture, where M. Thiers still remained. All republican Versailles

hastened thither. M. Rameau came at the head of the Municipal Council. He said to M. Thiers, "Whatever turn political events may take, the inhabitants of Versailles will never forget the great citizen whom they call the liberator and re-organizer of the country."

The late President hastened to leave for Paris. France did not show herself ungrateful. Addresses, deputations, presents of objects of art, and wreaths came from all parts. There was quite a rivalry between the towns, as to which should express its gratitude most warmly. All Europe manifested sympathy with this exhibition of national enthusiasm. Japan, and North and South America, sent their representatives. Never had the Elysée, no matter whom its inmate, beheld such an apotheosis as awaited M. Thiers in the modest dwelling to which he retired. It was not only the liberator who was thus saluted, it was also the statesman, who, by a rational adherence to the Republican form of Government, had saved Europe from a general conflagration, and France from civil war. M. Thiers' triumph was the triumph of the Republic. It went on increasing from year to year. The first time that he, as deputy, returned to the Chamber (it was on the 27th May, three days only after his fall), all the members of the Left received

him standing, with enthusiastic shouts, and prolonged and repeated cheering. The Right looked on with ill-concealed anger. The same scene was repeated four years afterwards, when M. de Fourtou, then a member of the Ministry of the 16th May, after having belonged to that of M. Thiers, conceived the unfortunate idea of applying the title of Liberator of the Territory to another. One cry arose from all lips. "There, there is the Liberator!" The Left turned towards M. Thiers, while the building rang with their cheers. When M. Thiers left France, he met with the same enthusiastic reception. At Florence and Geneva, he might have thought himself in Paris. He was no longer the President of the Republic, but he was its chief.

VI.

If the deputies and political men were not surprised at the great event of the 24th May, France was. The storm seemed to have burst in a clear sky. People thought they were peacefully progressing towards the liberation of the territory, and the conservative Republic, when they woke up one morning to find themselves face to face with a Ministry of Combat.

It was to be feared that the Republicans, who had received M. Thiers' declarations with so much joy, and who, when they thought themselves on the eve of the final establishment of the Republic, now saw their hopes suddenly dashed to the ground, and themselves as it were in the hands of their enemies, might attempt resistance. The Assembly, although it had committed a grave fault, had not broken the letter of any law, it had legality and might on its side; the least disorder would have been repressed by violence, and would have dealt a terrible blow to the

Republican party, which at this moment of difficulty, had more need of wisdom than ever. An address to the people, signed by 126 deputies of the Left, among whom were Messrs. Peyrat, Gambetta, Louis Blanc, Edgar Quinet, and Pelletan, was written and signed on the benches of the Assembly, on the evening of the 24th. It ran thus :—

" Citizens,

" In the position in which France is placed by the present political crisis, it is of the utmost importance that order should not be disturbed.

" We entreat you to avoid everything that could have a tendency to increase the public excitement.

" Never was the calmness of strength more necessary. Remain quiet. The safety of France and of the Republic is at stake."

From that time forth, whenever the Assembly or the Ministry, or the various representatives of the fallen Governments, or the leaders of the clerical faction, committed acts or pronounced or wrote words which might be looked upon as a provocation to the Republican party, these same voices uttered the same counsels of moderation, abstinence, and prudence. Whenever M. Thiers, M. Gambetta, or M. Jules Simon had occasion to reply to addresses or to speak at

public meetings, they never failed to repeat the same language; and its utterances are also to be found in the collective declarations published at different times by the Republican groups in the National Assembly, in the Senate, and in the Chamber of Deputies.

The newspapers of the party, both in Paris and in the provinces, published the proclamation of the 24th May, and gave it their adhesion. A unanimous resolution to win by calmness, patience, order, and discipline, laid hold of all minds. To this quiet and discipline are due all the votes gained in Parliament for the Republic, as well as the striking electoral successes of the last few years. Ever since the 24th May, 1873, the Republican party has presented this great spectacle. It was unmoved on that day, to the great surprise and deep regret of its enemies, even as it was on the 16th May, 1877. It has at last learned the way to conquer, and it employs it. During the 25th May, the consternation in Paris was great, but there was neither secret meeting, nor gathering in the streets, nor cry raised, nor newspaper article that overstepped the measure of a reasonable and thoughtful condemnation. The champions of order could only display their zeal in the tribune. They uttered fine phrases about social danger, without being

able to indicate the least fact from one end of France to the other which could be made to serve as a pretext. By this conduct the Republicans not only deprived their enemies of all incentive, but by proving in the most decided manner that the transmission of the Presidency was taking place without any catastrophe, and without the least excitement, even though it was being carried out against the strongly manifested will of the country, they demonstrated the nullity of the only argument to which the defenders of hereditary Monarchy can appeal with any appearance of reason. France had given the same proofs of good sense, and the Republicans had shown the same moderation in 1848, when power passed out of the honest hands of General Cavaignac into those of Prince Louis Napoleon, impatient even then to grasp the sceptre.

We have still to sketch in outline the part played by the majority which had triumphed on the 24th May. It would almost suffice for that purpose to say that it perseveringly opposed the Republicans and the Republic. This is its chief characteristic. Still there are other sides to its history, and we must be just towards that majority which has so seldom been just to others.

It was animated by a strong feeling of patriot-

ism. It voted for peace: and this has been charged against it as a crime. Never was there a more unjust charge. It did but submit with mingled patriotism and despair to an unavoidable necessity. On the right, on the left, there was not one who would not have preferred war with all its horrors to the miserable peace which we were about to conclude. Not only at the time of the ratification of the preliminaries, but during the period of the negotiations and of the occupation, patriotism burned high on all the benches of the Chamber, ready for any effort, any sacrifice. It is important that this point should be set beyond the reach of all our contests, and apart from all party quarrels. We do not say, and we do not think, that those who voted for peace showed more true courage than those who abstained or voted against it. No, each one voted with equal honesty according to his views. There were none but patriots in the National Assembly of 1871.

The Assembly may also be praised for the unshaken firmness with which it maintained the authority of the law and of the fundamental principles of society in its conflict with the Paris Commune. It was provoking and pitiless; these are in our eyes very great faults. Civil war was in itself so lamentable a thing, it might have such

serious results for the country, that the merest prudence should have dictated the avoidance of anything which could foment it, and draw partisans to its side. It was also an exaggeration to treat all the insurgents as criminals. It would have been more humane, more politic, and more truly just to pardon those who had been constrained or led away, and to reserve the severities of the law for the chiefs, the ringleaders, and those who had committed crimes and offences against public rights. But with these exceptions, and they are grave ones, it is no less true that it was a courageous thing to uphold the right, as the majority did, with inflexible dignity and perseverance, in a situation full of danger, with solicitations and menaces pouring in upon it from every side. The conduct of the Left showed greater good sense, for it never wavered, and it abstained from provocation and from vengeance. But in the distribution of praise and blame, the Right deserves to be praised as well as the Left, for its attachment to the cause of right, and for its unflinching courage.

It might also have been praised for its liberal ideas, which were carried to a considerable length, especially at first, if it had not made an exception with regard to the press laws, and if after the 24th May it had persevered in demanding

the municipal franchises and putting them in operation.

While M. Thiers was in power, the majority wanted to have the nomination of the Councillors of State; it wanted to nominate a part of the members of the Council of Public Instruction; it wanted to place the prefects under the superintendence of the Departmental Commissions; it wanted mayors elected by municipal councils; it loudly demanded the most widely extended ministerial responsibility; it could not show indignation enough against official candidatures. Later, it approved practices by no means in accordance with these fine theories, and the licence which it took or allowed to be taken with the Parliamentary *régime* robbed its former liberalism of all importance.

There seems more reason for giving it credit for certain laws in favour of the disinherited, and the weak: the law upon the labour of children, which was seriously discussed by competent men, and with regard to which it may be said that it occupied the attention of the Chamber for several years; the law for the repression of drunkenness, the law on the administrative committees of benevolent establishments, &c. The enactments of current policy, the budgets, the imposition of taxes, filled up so great a number of the sittings,

that a less hardworking Chamber would have left such laws for example as the regulation of factory children's labour, to drag on indefinitely in bureaux and select committees. But this Chamber was anxious to do good if it could; it did not spare itself, as those who saw it at work will readily bear witness.

No doubt, it would have laboured with equal zeal at the amelioration of primary education, but there it was prevented by the religious question.

The Chamber which voted for public prayers, proposed regimental chaplains, and founded Catholic universities, shrank year by year from the draft of a law which made primary instruction compulsory. This law raised two or three great questions, which would have called conflicting passions, over which the majority was not sure of having the upper hand, into play. When France at last determines to make education compulsory, she will have been outstripped by all the other countries of Europe.

One great charge brought against the majority in the Assembly of 1871, is that it was clerical. It deserves the reproach, but it ought to be added for what reasons and in what measure.

The elections of 1871 had sent up to the Assembly an unexpected number of Legitimists and ardent Catholics, who gave utterance from the

tribune to a language which had been forgotten for forty years past. They attempted to introduce religion into politics, to the great detriment of both, either by multiplying protests in favour of the temporal power, which were at least untimely, or by reviving or trying to revive institutions which are incompatible with the progress of science, and the conquest of civil and political liberty. The attempts of this clerical party, which were more violent than skilful, were frequently repelled by the Chamber. Thus, they did not succeed in compromising the Assembly with the Italian Government, by their continual claims for the temporal sovereignty of the Pope, nor in appointing chaplains to our regiments, nor in increasing the already considerable influence which the bishops exercised in the University councils. What they did manage to obtain may be reduced to three points: public prayers, the church of the Sacred Heart, and Catholic Universities. Perhaps public opinion attached an exaggerated importance to the solemn institution of prayers, and to the erection of a church. On the other hand, it did not fully perceive all the consequences of a contest between the State University and secular education. The creation of Catholic Universities had for centuries been the dream of the Ultramontanes and especially of the Jesuits. Successive parlia-

ments strenuously opposed these attempts; and the kings refused to consent to them. The establishment of a Republic was necessary, in order to allow bishops and congregations to participate in the important, the formidable, right of giving the entry into the liberal professions, and into public functions to young men. Many nations, from whom we might take lessons in liberalism, do not hesitate to invoke the name of God even in the formula of their laws: all that one can, all that one ought to exact in such a matter is absolute respect for liberty of conscience, consequently the perfect equality of the different creeds, and the individual right of each citizen to make no profession of any. Among Republicans there is a practice, strange, to say the least of it, of establishing a solidarity between Republican ideas and materialistic doctrines. Many of those persons who fall into this confusion do not consider the words they use, nor the difference which exists between superstition and religious beliefs of a higher order, between religious beliefs and philosophy. They demand liberty in every respect, to the exclusion of liberty of conscience, which is the chief of all the others, and their metaphysics consist in the negation of all reality but that of matter and movement. The number of these intolerant and inconsistent persons is

small, and this ignorant and puerile system of metaphysics had no representatives on the Left benches of the Assembly. When one day a "clerical" speaker accused the Republicans of owning no God, indignant protestations arose on all sides. The Republic shows by its votes, by its acts, that when it is in power it knows how to respect, and defend, if necessary, all beliefs which are not opposed to our laws; and one may say, in particular of the clergy and the Catholic Church, that they have never enjoyed such freedom under any other form of Government as they have had under the Republic.

But that which under the Government of the Assembly of 1871, justly excited the alarm of the Liberals, was the spirit of encroachment and aggression which the clerical party perpetually showed both in and out of the Chamber. The revival of miracles, pilgrimages, missions, the neglect of every rule imposed by the Concordat, the publication, unauthorized, unverified in France, of the bulls and decrees of the Court of Rome, the assembling of bishops in council and synod, in defiance of the organic articles, the multiplication of religious orders and convents, the existence in France of unauthorized congregations, and even of congregations formally interdicted by the existing laws; the tone of provocation pervading

certain episcopal charges, the direct and energetic interference of the clergy in the elections, the facilities granted to the Catholic Universities for acquiring and possessing property, the donations in mortmain free from the jurisdiction of the Council of State, on the plea of creating schools, the right conceded to schoolmasters, not chosen by the State and hardly under its control, to have a voice in the granting of decrees, to which important privileges both of the University and the administrative order are attached, a vast number of boys' schools, and nearly all the girls' schools given up to the congregations, the more and more manifest control of the Jesuits in secondary education; all these things were disquieting. It cannot be seriously denied that the Government was warranted in calling for the execution of the laws, of all the laws, and in ameliorating State education by introducing reforms into its methods, and also by obtaining subsidies for its purposes.

The Clergy said to the Government, "We claim the right of praying, of preaching, of teaching in the schools, in the pulpit, in our writings; the right of owning property, the right of association; and you liberals, you deny us these rights, or at least, you will grant them only under restrictions which you would never submit

to yourselves! Are you liberals? Are you fellow-citizens? Have you in France two equities?"

The Government and the liberals answered, "We will admit all these rights in the exact measure in which you yourselves will admit them in the case of citizens, and provided that to the advantages of the common law you do not want to add those of privilege. It is your interest to appeal to liberty within the conditions of the common law, but to claim nothing beyond that. When we compel you to abide within those limits, far from oppressing or doing you an injury, we are really protecting your interests better than you serve them yourselves. The ground you take up, in your blindness, gives a handle against you to your enemies, whose designs we do not favour because we will not consent either to oppress or to be oppressed." There cannot be a doubt that at this moment, the Catholic clergy retain all the advantages guaranteed to them by the Concordat, while they are subjected to none of those restrictions which the Concordat imposes. They would never have obtained such a position under the Empire, under Louis Philippe, or under Charles X., and they were far from enjoying so much liberty even under the *ancien régime*.

The Republic has shut its eyes, obeying in that the same principle which has led it so often to abstain from all preventive measures towards fallen dynasties. Occasionally an imprudent act of religious intolerance stirs resentment which goes too far, and which ought to lead to reflection on the part of those by whom it has been provoked; then, storm of this kind is followed by a long calm, during which the power of the Clergy over education and charitable institutions is silently extended and strengthened. Such a condition of affairs is dangerous to the State, more dangerous still to religion, and for it the majority of 1871 is to blame. It is desirable that it should be taken in hand, and that respect for religious beliefs and the absolute independence of the civil power should be secured at one and the same time.

A considerable part of the majority reluctantly gave way to the pressure of the clerical party; or rather, there were on the Right benches, "clericals," who were so by conviction and by temperament, and who would have yielded before neither argument nor peril; but there were a number, more considerable still, of political, "clericals," whose aim was to make religion a means of government, and not go the length of subordinating the State to religion. The consequence

of this situation was, that in purely religious questions conflict was extremely obstinate, and victory very uncertain. But when the matter in hand was a contest with the Republicans, the reactionary army would fall into line of battle immediately, with complete and unerring unanimity.

We must repeat, because it is an unquestionable truth which lights up the whole of our contemporary politics, that the distinctive feature of the majority formed in 1871, is that it fought resolutely against the establishment of the Republic, and that, deliberately and voluntarily, it kept France in a state of uncertainty and agitation, in the interest of its monarchical hopes. All France wanted to be at peace, and saw how peace might be realized. All France desired to maintain the Government of M. Thiers, to establish the Republic, to make it essentially conservative, to lay it open to all citizens without distinction of origin, to forget the past, to welcome every form of patriotism in the service of the supreme end of national resurrection. Unfortunately excitement, passion, and sometimes even conspiracy, succeeded each other like a series of spontaneous generations in the Assembly, which ought not only to have taught but to have imposed peace.

Are we in error? Is it party-spirit which suggests this thought? Are we influenced by the memory of ancient defeats so completely wiped out by the double national ballot of 1875 and 1877? No, it is history which constrains us, the annals of the Assembly and the acts themselves of the Government of Combat themselves cry aloud. The ascendancy of the Republic increases so fast, and is affirmed over and over again by majorities so formidable, that it imposes itself at length on the parties; but for seven years it was necessary to wrestle day by day in Parliament, while outside its doors everybody was convinced.

If proof were wanting, we need only recall the parliamentary inquiries, and the struggle against M. Thiers so ably and so perfidiously conducted.

These inquiries, notwithstanding the relative moderation of some of their authors,—what are they if not monuments of hatred? Take these three: that into the 4th September, that into the 18th March, that into the state of the Markets. Let us put the last inquiry aside; reports on the use of public funds, on bribery in elections, on transgressions of authority, on the position of the civil services, on the stagnation of trade, all these are entirely within the sphere of parliamentary inquisition. We will

not even ask whether in certain reports of the Market Commission (*commission des marchés*) the enemy may not be detected where the judge alone should be found. All that can be claimed from members of Parliament is that they should be moderate. Party-men they cannot help being; they have been nominated by their party, to represent and defend the interests of that party, and even, to a certain extent, to serve its resentments. Nevertheless this very concession, which we must necessarily make to the nature of political bodies, demonstrates the peril of transforming inquirers into judges.

We will go farther. Although in most constitutions the judgment of political crimes by political bodies is prescribed, we shall always maintain that such a measure is neither equitable for the accused nor profitable for the State. Justice thus administered is no longer justice, it is vengeance. At least, in our present Constitution, when a President of the Republic is on his trial, he is accused by one Chamber and judged by the other. The Chamber which gives the judgment is that which, by its origin, by the age of its members, and by their restricted number, gives the greatest guarantees of impartiality. This Chamber in all the acts of the procedure,

and the judgment, assumes the character of a criminal court. It binds itself to all the protective formalities of the right of defence. The witnesses who give evidence before it, or before its commissions, do so on oath. Their evidence is made known to the accused, who may discuss it and call witnesses for their defence. The inquiry, the report which is drawn up on it, the public prosecutor's speech, form only a very important, but not decisive part of the procedure. The accused is denied nothing in the public sitting, neither the right to call fresh witnesses, nor to refute the evidence, nor the presence of any counsel whom he may select. The judges are warned, by the exceptional character with which they are invested, by a long procedure in which everything passes under their eyes, by exhaustive debates, and by public opinion, whose organs are not silenced during the trial; to listen to their conscience and not to their passion. If this were not sufficient, the very sight of the accused, whose life and liberty are dependent on their verdict, would be enough to recall them to a sense of their duty as honourable men. But in spite of all this, the saying of that great citizen and distinguished *savant*, François Arago, will always be true: "Anathema to political bodies who judge political offences."

But when the Assembly of 1871 held the inquiry into the 4th September, and the inquiry into the 18th March, by whom was it instructed? By itself. It proceeded to hold this inquiry not as a judicial court, but as a Parliament; that is to say, with sovereign liberty. The inquirers were appointed in the bureaux, as if the matter were a preliminary report on a bill. The commissions belonged to the majority; so many commissioners so many enemies therefore.

It was by a mere chance that the Left was able to get four members out of thirty into the commission appointed to inquire into the 4th September, and seven into that appointed to inquire into the 18th March. When the commission formed its bureau, whom did it choose as president? M. Saint-Marc Girardin, an Orleanist; and as vice-president, M. Daru, a Bonapartist. M. Saint-Marc Girardin was already weakened by age and ill-health. M. Daru almost always presided. Thus a former minister of the Empire prosecuted the Revolution which had overthrown the Empire, in the name of the Chamber, whose first act had been to condemn the Empire. He called for what evidence he pleased, he directed the interrogatories, communicated or did not communicate the depositions to those whom they concerned. The de-

positions had no judicial character. The witnesses, appearing before political persons and not before judges, did not take any oath. Some, belonging to the Empire, which was conducting the inquiry, transformed their depositions into an act of accusation. Others, agents of the Republican Government, who had been retained in its service through unfortunate indulgence, or who had been chosen by it, but were thwarted in their ambition, gained the favour of the commission by betraying or abusing their late chiefs. Among the witnesses whom the commission consented to hear, were some who had no public character whatever, who passed for being secret agents of the Empire, who declared that they knew nothing about the insurrection of the Commune, *àpropos* to which they were summoned, and who came simply to renew the old slanders of the imperial police against the Republican candidates of 1863.

The commission listened to all this quietly, and did not even inform its colleagues, sitting every day in the Assembly by its side, of the ridiculous words and odious deeds which were attributed to them. M. Arago, M. Challemel-Lacour, M. Gent, M. Gambetta, and several others made indignant protests from the tribune. General Trochu has recorded his in two little books,

admirable alike for their feeling and eloquence. Although all the reproaches addressed by the Assembly to the commission were deserved, we do not wish to enter into that quarrel here. We are not sitting in judgment either upon M. Daru or the members of the commission. They certainly believed that they were impartial, perhaps even generous, who knows? We might instance, among men of their party on the benches of the former Chamber, more than one member, who would have given a very different turn to the affair if fortune had put it in his power to do so. No, we do not complain of the individual members; we complain of the commission itself, of this party which had fallen, and was condemned, being called to judge its conquerors, discussing them in the shade at its pleasure, without legal formalities, immediately publishing the voluminous reports of its inquiry, not as parliamentary reports are published, to be distributed only among the members of Parliament; but publishing them before any public debate had been held, as books on general sale, having them advertised and commended in the *Journal Officiel* as edifying reading; multiplying copies first in the *Officiel* and then in the *Annales* of the Assembly, distributing a special edition, and then printing several editions in quarto and octavo for sale.

This enormous official publicity, given to evidence which had been neither investigated nor sifted, was an act of party-spirit, an act of vengeance. It was not in any way an act of justice.

And, let it be noted, it is not only on behalf of the Government of Defence that we protest: but on behalf of the Commune. We cannot be suspected of any partiality for those who instituted the Commune, nor for those who could hesitate to stigmatize it.

Among other causes of resentment, we hold it guilty of the greatest crime that has ever been committed against the Republic and republican ideas. We admit that it ought to be written against, and stigmatized in books, and we are setting the example. We desired that it should be tried regularly, according to law, by judges; and we acknowledge that the publication of proceedings and of judgments is right. But you, the inquirers, who are you? Are you judges? Then call up the accused as well as their accusers, call the witnesses for the defence, let them all give their evidence on oath, let both sides have full liberty of debate, do not publish the accusation without publishing the defence, and do not publish it like a novel, to enrich the publishers, or like a pamphlet to spread hatred, or propagate what may be only calumnies. That is what

we say for the authors of the Commune, who only just failed to overthrow the Republic? What shall we say for the Republicans, who have repaired the faults of the Empire, and saved the honour of the country?

An immense number of books, pamphlets in verse and prose, caricatures, magazine and newspaper articles, have been written against them. Abominable slanders against them have been invented and incessantly repeated in the hope of thus giving them a sort of confirmation. As for a book or a speech, we understand it, we admit it, we provoke it. So much the worse for the enemy if he puts forth any lies in it! A deputy has a right to speak, a citizen to write. Attacks on individuals have only exactly the weight which they carry themselves, or which is lent to them by the name of their author. They can be refuted, and the public can decide. That is life; that is liberty. Was this the case with your committee reports, published under the authority of the Chamber, by a committee of the Chamber, in the *Journal Officiel* and in the *Annales* of the Chamber? You were not judges, for you had not been appointed, and you observed none of the forms of judicial procedure; and yet you took upon yourselves all the appearance of judges, in order more surely to deceive the public. You

speak as sovereigns, as the elect of universal suffrage. History will tell you, and public conscience has already declared that all your inquiries were the acts of party-spirit, of revenge, of reprisal, a machination of discord, a propaganda of hatred.

Hatred of what? Of the Republic. That was all that the different monarchical parties had in common. They were divided amongst themselves by all their memories, by the defeats sustained, by blood spilled, by many treasons. It is not necessary to go so very far back to find a time when a Legitimist would not have shaken hands with an Orleanist. Only yesterday both Legitimists and Orleanists regarded the Empire as the author, not only of our material, but of our moral ruin. Division, deep and irreconcilable, existed, from a historical point of view; as well as division amounting to antagonism in principles. Of the three Monarchies, one rests its claim on divine right, the others know only force. Each of the three parties knew how much it lost in dignity, in cohesion, in moral influence by their coalition; but they must make haste to achieve their first purpose—that is to say, the destruction of the Republic—notwithstanding. Hence their alliance.

It was also hatred of the Republic which

united them against M. Thiers. They had said, when appointing him at Bordeaux, that they wanted a leader for the conservative party. He had always been this leader. As he said himself, he was no longer of an age to change. Under his administration there had been a civil war; he had crushed it. Where was there a conservative who would have displayed such resolute determination and such talent in dealing with the Commune? Several towns, at the same time, made an attempt to espouse the cause of the insurrection: he suppressed the disturbances on the spot, or when he was warned in time prevented them from breaking out. The Assembly had endeavoured to deprive the central authority of some of the attributes which he, perhaps wrongly, considered necessary; and then, regardless of the passions which he should rouse, he had opposed unseasonable reforms, steadily disputing the point with all the parties, and on a critical occasion asking the Chamber to revoke its own decision on the spot.

No one, on any bench, had attacked property, or even dreamt of attacking it; but an income-tax had been proposed, a tax on the business returns; this, under any aspect could not be called socialism; but, nevertheless, there was something in these innovations which appeared

to him to threaten the security of private interests: he had at once opposed it, showing himself more conservative than the conservatives.

It was the same as regards protection. Certainly one can be a free-trader without being the enemy of industry and commerce; but he thought otherwise, he held what may be called the creed of national labour. In finance his first care was to maintain the position of the Bank intact, and to make a sinking fund for the debt, even at the time that our finances were most embarrassed. His chef-d'œuvre was effecting the loan and the payment of the indemnity without producing a crisis or any great financial perturbation. As to recruiting, he belonged to the old school; we mean by that, the school of the first Empire, which after all is not such a bad school for fighting purposes. He was more for quality than quantity. He asked for five years' service, not being able to get eight. He had never wished for universal suffrage, nor applauded its advent. Now that it was established and that it was impossible to give it up, he agreed with those who wished to have it regulated, or even as they said on the Right "purified." We must admit that he was not "clerical;" that he had never been; for, in order to be a good

"clerical," one must be either narrow-minded or a hypocrite, and he was neither; but, although he desired liberty of conscience, and strongly opposed the encroachments of the clergy, he recognized the strength of the Catholic church in our country and in all Europe: he considered it good policy to make an ally of her, at all events to avoid making an enemy of her. He had witnessed the occupation of Rome by the Italians with regret; but he was too wise not to accept the *fait accompli*, and not to repress the attempt, at clerical agitation, which were contrary to the right, and especially contrary to our dearest national interests; but with the exception of three or four persons of no great influence, everybody on the Right agreed with him on this matter. Besides, he was in all things full of deference and even consideration for the clergy. In 1850, as reporter on the education laws, he had rendered them services which they did not deny. Taking his opinions as a whole, he ought to have found his adversaries on the Left, his supporters on the Right. Nevertheless the further they went, the more did confidence in him increase on the Left and diminish on the Right, The contrast was already striking during the struggle with the Commune, two or three months after the Government had been formed. From

the end of 1871, they thought to checkmate him by attacking his ministers. He could hardly ascend the tribune without having to endure some rude interruption from the Right. At last they went so far as to insult him in a manner which his age, his genius, his services in the past, not to mention his services in the present, rendered incomprehensible. If the Left proposed any means of strengthening his hands, of facilitating his action, it was either refused, when a refusal was possible, or if it were not, the enforced concession was made in the most disobliging and humiliating form that could be devised.

The contest, long dissembled, became overt from the date of the message of 1872, in which he declared categorically that nothing was any longer possible except a Republic. That day his fall was determined upon. As for the mischief which would accrue to a country still only convalescent, as to the difficulty of maintaining our position abroad after this new internal convulsion, as for the disturbance of every kind that would befall public credit and affairs in general, as for the necessity which would arise of transforming, so to speak, the expedient and the provisional into a system and principle of government, as for the monstrous ingratitude of overthrowing the saviour of his country on the

very day on which he should have finally effected its salvation, all that was forgotten, or at least disregarded. Nothing was of importance save staying the ascendancy of the Republic. Everybody in the coalition camp said to himself, we shall see by-and-by how we can stifle our allies, but let us stifle the Republic first. Such was the origin of the 24th May, and other analogous events which have arisen since then.

M. Thiers, who always spoke out (that was one of his strong points), said as much openly in the tribune: "I offend the Republicans every day by defending your ideas against theirs; nevertheless they uphold me, and you attack me. Your reason and theirs is one and the same, it is because I desire to found the Republic."

This hostility of all the parties against the Republic is surprising; for, however naturally the Orleanists or the Bonapartists, when in power, may have opposed the Republicans who wished to upset them; it is not so easy to understand how on the 24th May, Orleanists, Bonapartists, and Legitimists should have united to upset the Republic, and if they could have done so, provoke a revolution, without knowing to which of them the benefit would ensue. There might well be in the mind of each party some personal hope; but so vague, so far-fetched, so uncertain

that one is forced to admit their preference for anything rather than a Republic, and that the Orleanists, for instance, would rather be governed by M. Bonaparte than by M. Thiers.

But whence this violent hatred for the most liberal and the most rational form of government?

Does not the Republic give us what every good Government ought to give, order and liberty? Have we not under the Republic all the liberty of which we are capable? For surely that is what we should ask for, anything beyond involving danger. A nation has a right to the sum total of the liberty of which it is capable, and to those institutions which may render it capable of a new and more ample liberty by enlightening, reforming and strengthening it. Has any Monarchy ever given us so much liberty, and so many means of becoming worthy of liberty as we possess to-day? And this ample liberty which we enjoy, is it not accompanied by that other blessing, without which liberty itself would be valueless, that is to say, order? When has the law ever been more punctiliously observed than it now is? When has authority at any time been better obeyed or held in greater honour?

The presidential elections are quoted, and a great argument made out of them. At present

under the Republic we have quiet, this must be admitted; but we must necessarily pass through great crises, at the expiration of stated times, for the election of a President. Here, again, facts answer for themselves. The experiment has been tried again and again. In 1848, authority passed from General Cavaignac to Prince Louis Napoleon, without even the shadow of a disturbance. The same thing occurred, when in 1873 Marshal MacMahon succeeded M. Thiers. These great changes were effected without any trouble at a time when the election of the new President was regarded as a triumph won by the monarchical party over the Republican party, and this transfer of power which was twice accomplished with the most absolute calm, during times of great agitation, and under the most unfavourable conditions, is suddenly to develope into a menacing crisis, a peril to society, when it has become part of our regular life, when the outgoing and incoming President will both be Republicans?

Without wishing to make any comparison between the men, which it would be profoundly unjust to do, it is certain that in 1873, as well as in 1848, the transfer of authority was made under conditions menacing to the Republic. The two Presidents, who were both raised to the presidency by the reactionary party, declared in

almost the same terms, that no changes should be made in the existing order of things. This was the only means of quieting public opinion, and at the same time it was a proof of the violence that was being done to it. In 1873 that declaration was at least sincere on the part of the President who signed it; but those who had drawn it up were notoriously hostile to the Republic, and were already planning a restoration. In the Cabinet formed on 25th May to govern France, there was not a single Republican. M. de Broglie, M. Magne, M. Ernoul would have been much offended had they been called anything but Orleanist, Bonapartist and Legitimist. No one was ignorant of the fact that M. Thiers had been overthrown for having declared that the Republic must be established, and that no other Government was possible. Whatever may have been Marshal MacMahon's thoughts and intentions, there is no doubt whatever that the leaders of the triumphant coalition had fought against the Republic, it was the Republic which they had defeated on the 24th May. Never was truth more incontestable, nor less contested. And in spite of this glaring evidence the Republicans remained quiet, they submitted, they prepared for a constitutional and legal struggle; they did not expect, did not wish, for success except from the elections. It was

thus, under such exceptional and formidable conditions that one President succeeded the other. Where shall we find a more striking proof, a more absolute demonstration of the vitality of the Republic?

Monarchists, you who see a mote in your neighbour's eye which does not exist, have a beam in your own. You can forget, with strange complacency, palace revolutions and changes of reigns, far more serious events than the substitution of one President for another can possibly be, in a country where the powers of the President are most rigorously circumscribed. Even at a time when the monarchical principle was above all competition and all discussion; when it seemed even to the boldest that they might change their king, but that they could not do without a king, the succession of one monarch to another almost always brought disturbances in its train, and a minority was a national calamity. Now, after so many revolutions have been compressed into so short a space of time, however firm your convictions, you are unable to conceive that in the present state of minds and things a minority could possibly fail to produce a revolution, or dream of a change of reign which would not be at the least a change of dynasty. Do not speak of us as if we were in-

stability and you duration. Such language might have been fitting from the defenders of Monarchy up to the year 1774. Since then, how many legitimate successors have inherited the crown without a revolution? Two, in more than 200 years; Louis XVI. and Charles X.! And what has been the duration of a dynasty since the death of Louis XVI.? Fifteen years, or to speak more correctly, five years; five years of calm preceded by five years of disturbance to establish the reign, and followed by five years of disturbance to overthrow it. We have gone through this experience four times in three quarters of a century. And beware lest you take care that you are not fated to witness a repetition of it. Not one of the Monarchies which at this moment are coveting France would dare to promise to itself that it could last three years.

A Monarchy is a hypothesis which you can only make last so long as it is active and does good service, but which no human agency can bring back to life when it has been suppressed, discussed, replaced, compared. The committee of nine, presided over by M. Changarnier, or a committee "*de comptabilité*" under M. Rouher, might recall an aspirant to the throne; a reactionary and monarchical Chamber like that of 1871 might crown him; it might even, with a certain expen-

diture of money, rebuild the Tuileries and stuff it with chamberlains from basement to attic; it might unfurl the white flag with its *fleurs-de-lys*, or nail an eagle for the third time to the staff of our tricolour flag. But that which can never be restored to France is her monarchical faith, that sort of faith for which a man dies, and which personifies a country in a man. Where shall we find a trace of the prestige of the Napoleons? The adventurer has killed the hero. In the land of universal suffrage—in the world of common sense—there is no more any room for ghosts.

Another strange objection to the Republic is that it is said to condemn us to isolation from the great European family. Their sacred majesties will not be elbowed by the majesty of the people. This is a libel on their majesties: they see clearer than that. This is to forget history, and to invoke an old saying against a new truth. There is no longer a great European family; the Empire exploded that. Only conquest and interests exist henceforth. Europe wants to know whether we are quiet or disturbed, because trouble in France spreads beyond her borders. Europe wants to know our strength or our weakness, because we are a rich country, both manufacturing and agricultural, warlike, with a population of 38,000,000, placed between England

and Germany, occupying the head of the great commercial routes, and in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, we have not lost our place in the world of thought. But it is a matter of perfect indifference to Europe whether we have an absolute Monarchy like that of Russia, or a parliamentary Monarchy like those of England, Spain, and Italy, a federation like that of Germany, or a Republic, if it pleases us. For Europe, as for France, the best form of French government is that best adapted to our ideas and our interests, and which is therefore most likely to last. Europe knows that a Monarchy needs war, a Republic peace. Never will a President of a Republic say, "It is my war, I must have it!" Those are the words of princes, and their pleasures. France knows their price to her cost, having had to pay it twice in half-a-century. She respects the tranquillity of peoples and the institutions which they confer upon themselves. Her foreign policy consists in this: to maintain peace at home. So long as the Republic is peaceful and prosperous at home, it will be respected and powerful abroad.

The pretended impossibility of maintaining order and respect for the law, those periodic crises with which we are threatened, this fancied isolation, are all so falsified by events, that it is

almost unnecessary to contradict them. None of these party arguments have any effect on the masses, who believe what they see, and who have now seen peace for seven years. But in order to disturb and frighten them, two spectres are invoked. Up to 1870 there was only one; the Reign of Terror. Now there are two; the Reign of Terror, and the Commune.

The Reign of Terror and the Commune are not the Republic. Let us take only the Commune;—it was suppressed by the Republic, [illegible] it is not proved that a Monarchy would [illegible] succeeded in retaking Paris. Riots have [illegible] been wanting under any Monarchy; and if they have not assumed the terrible character of the Commune it was not because we were under the Republic of 1871, but in consequence of the disastrous condition to which we had been reduced by eighteen years of the Empire and the war of 1870. Who will deny that the anti-social and anti-human doctrines, of which the Terror in 1793 and in 1871 were the ephemeral triumph, were all condemned, stigmatized, opposed by the Republican party as energetically and more effectually than by any other political party? One must be very ignorant of history, or take most impudent liberties with human credulity, to pretend that confiscations,

executions without trial, wholesale condemnations and massacres, took place only in 1793 and 1871. The Monarchists derive little advantage from a comparison between the Terror and the Dragonnades, the *Loi des suspects* and the *Lettres de cachet*, the assignats and Law's bank, the morals of the Directory and those of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, the murder of the Duke d'Enghien and that of Marshal Ney, the massacres of September and those of the Glacière, the assassination of General Brune and that of Marshal Brune! Each party has its bloody annals, which it is wicked to recall unnecessarily, for it is wicked to stir up hatred. But it is as unfair to reproach all Republicans with the Terror, as it is to reproach all Catholics with the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

So much being said as a tribute to truth, and without adding proofs, for the proofs are to be found in all our histories, in our monuments, in the public places in all our towns, we do not hesitate to say with our enemies, that the great misfortune and the great obstacle to the Republic is, neither the coalition of the Monarchists, nor the hatred of the Clerical party, but the Terror and the Commune. It is the Terror and the Commune which are brought against us. This is unjust, absurd, contrary to good sense and to

facts; but so it is. The Commune which we defeated, which we crushed, which has no longer a shell, a sword, a sou, or a partisan who dares to raise his head, the Commune which in fact no longer exists, fights against us continually, thanks to the persistent and envenomed calumnies of the enemies of the Republic.

Let us persist in our declarations, since we are forced to do so by the persistence of the attack, and also in that prudence which constitutes our strength. Let us show on all occasions, by our words and actions, that we are the implacable enemies of disorder, the friends, the servants, the defenders of the law; the friends and defenders of family life, of property, and of liberty of conscience, which is the highest and most general form of religious liberty. Here again we find M. Thiers saying to the whole Chamber, "The victory shall be to the wisest;" and to the Republicans especially, "You can perish only through your own faults." He also said to them with great meaning, "You must inspire confidence." In order to inspire confidence, it is enough for us to appear what we are.

Inspire confidence! this word wounds certain lofty souls, who will not endure suspicion. But take life as it is; take man with his injustices and his failings; the purest are often the most

calumniated. It is the same with parties. Let us help the truth to shine forth.

You are conservatives; say so firmly, simply,—because it is the truth,—because it is denied, because it is well for the cause, if not for you who believe yourselves above suspicion, that all the world should know the truth. Much reluctance had to be overcome ere advanced Republicans could be induced to call themselves conservative. They would not have a name that their enemy had taken. But this name is your right. You must claim it, since it is yours. Those who at the present time wish for the Empire, or the white flag, or the red flag, are the true revolutionists; and you are the conservatives. Did the Empire show more respect to property and the family than you have shown? Are you likely to bring back the reign of money-dealers and courtezans whether titled or taxed? Are not honesty in business and domestic morality essentially republican virtues? For seven years you have daily proved by your actions that you are conservatives; unfurl your flag then, since you belong to the regiment! Inspire confidence! Inspire confidence! Neither Tribunes nor Cæsars, nor Carmagnoles, nor blood-stained purple robes, nor revolutions, nor *Coups d'État;* but law, liberty, peace, publicity! A mild and just Re-

public, open to all, respecting the sacred principles on which society is founded, and the inalienable rights of conscience; acknowledging no other empire but that of the law, and no other ascendency but that of reason. When the programme is in the heart, it ought to be constantly on the lips. Happy are the parties who gain by being known, who invoke only good sense, and whose cause is identical with that of justice!

THE END

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